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IMMORTALITY: A STUDY OF BELIEF



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# IMMORTALITY A STUDY OF BELIEF AND EARLIER ADDRESSES

BY  
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NEW HAVEN  
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
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SEP - 7 1920

MS 10 22 p 1 - 1720  
P 22 p 13 N 33

## PREFACE

It is thirty years ago this spring since Dr. Clarke preached his first sermon in the old historic church at Hamilton, New York, where I was then a student. The words with which he began his ministry were, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all," and for three years, Sunday after Sunday, he laid upon us the peace and benediction of his spirit. We were not aware that one of the foremost religious thinkers of our time was offering us the ripest fruits of his experience and meditation. The books that were to affect so powerfully the thought of our day were not yet written; but we knew, those of us, at least, who had ears to hear, that we were in the presence of a teacher who spoke to our minds and hearts as no teacher had ever done. "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" was one of his texts, and a characteristic one. All his words were in season, for they were all charged with reality and sincerity, and they all "found" us. It seems, as one looks back upon it, as if a better type of preaching for college men could hardly be imagined, and I rejoice to remember that it seemed so then. While the sermon was going forward, one had no time to think of the method, so absorbing was the development of the theme, so moving the quiet application of it; but when it was over, one had leisure to reflect upon the marvelous simplicity of manner, the faultless adequacy of phrase. The benign gaze over the congregation; the steady, tranquil voice moving on from point to point; the familiar gesture with two hands, as if he were visibly moulding and shaping the idea before us; the directness, the transparent honesty, the absolute genuineness—one

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noted and loved them then, one remembers them how vividly now! He writes, in a letter of 1897: "I preached this morning . . . on 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' The secret of the Lord is the secret of the open eye, and what the open eye sees is that God is good. I had a noble time with it, and I think you would have enjoyed it." At how many such "noble times" has one assisted! The fault with such preaching, as with all perfection, is that it spoils one's taste for anything less excellent. Although the ideas that Dr. Clarke was then presenting to us were novel, and, to minds so plastic as ours, might easily have proved disturbing, there was never in his manner a hint of the self-conscious or the polemical; and I shall not soon forget the dismay and repugnance with which, some years later, I listened to another famous liberal preacher, who could not conceal his amazement at his own temerity.

Little by little, week by week, Dr. Clarke laid before us his whole thought, quite honestly and directly, but so quietly and simply and reasonably that there was no place for surprise or alarm; only a steadily growing sense of light, of freedom, of well-being. Never was preaching more perfectly expressive of the preacher. The singleness of aim, the refusal to be distracted by non-essentials, the unswerving quest of reality, the boundless comprehension, the unfailing sympathy, the invincible peace, which were the notes of every sermon, were the qualities of the man. Even the brief, pregnant sentences that linger in one's memory after all the years have his stamp upon them. "Religion is the humble life of a filial soul with the good God." "God's thought of us is the *steady* thought of love and wisdom."

The discourses of the present volume have the same accent. As one reads them, the old mood returns, the old thrill of aspiration towards goodness and towards God that wrought upon one's youth, and gave to life the most

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potent direction it has ever known. This is no doubt true of all who ever really came under his influence, no matter how far, in later years, their opinions may have diverged from his. Having known him, one could never think in a quite illiberal or unreal fashion again. This is because of his breadth, his comprehension, the entire absence in him of the sectarian mind. The substance and method of his thought may be laid hold of by men of diverse religious opinions, and have been, to their great profit. He once inquired whimsically in a letter, "Am I an Episcopalian-maker?" Certainly many clergymen, and laymen too, of faiths very different from his own, have acknowledged their profound obligation to him. The explanation is that he habitually dwelt in a region of thought that underlies and, in a measure, unifies all credal distinctions. "We are always talking," he writes, in the address on Huxley and Phillips Brooks, "as if the great question of our time were some question of theology, but it is not; it is the question of religion." This is what takes him out of any "school of theology," however broad, and places him among those, of whatever creed, who have a genius for religion. This accounts for the curious and, in the circumstances, even amusing resemblance that the student of Newman's writings cannot fail to notice between many of Dr. Clarke's deepest convictions and those of the great Catholic liberal. Such a remark as that above quoted concerning religion and theology is wholly in Newman's manner. So is the characteristically brief sentence in the address on Immortality: "I am too small for my belief." Newman once wrote in a letter: "The human mind in its present state is unequal to its own powers of apprehension: it embraces more than it can master"—which might almost have served as a text for the address on Mystery in Religion.

But these addresses require no texts drawn from other writers. Like the sermons, they are in no sense deriva-

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tive. Upon all his writing, as upon all his speech, is the stamp of an original mind. It is notable how little he quotes from anyone, even the greatest. Only occasionally is there an echo of his immense reading. This is involved in his absolute genuineness, his inability to say the unreal. He says nothing that he has not lived. Why then should he quote authority for it? It is based on the only authority that is infallible, the authority of experience. This is the reason why one receives from all his writing so vivid an impression of his personality. How alive he seems! How alive, in the deepest sense of the word life, he still is! One thinks of Whitman's boast, "Who touches this book touches a man."

The style and tone of the addresses is the style and tone of the sermons, and of his talk as well. He had but one manner. "We come, old friends and new together, to sit down in this quiet place and learn the truth." So begins the address on Mystery in Religion, and so might have begun every sermon, every serious conversation. There was no emphasis, no dogmatism, no touch of controversy. To sit down in a quiet place, with old friends or new, and learn the truth together was his only method; and little by little, under the spell of it, one felt oneself swept out of one's perplexity and narrowness and self-seeking, into the presence of the very laws of life. Nor was there, as I have said, any disturbing sense that one was entering strange and alien regions of thought. Old things became new, and immortal. "What we call commonplaces in religion are such only in the world of talk," he says, in the address on the Young Minister's Outlook; but they were not commonplaces in his talk. One found, to quote him again, that "some very ancient things are still true."

I despair of conveying the living impression that I have of him. I had the happiness and honor of his friendship as well as his instruction, and the hours I have spent with



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him are as unforgettable as those in which I have heard him preach. I have said already that he was exactly like his sermons. His mind was the "large upper chamber" of the Pilgrim, "whose window opened towards the sun-rising; the name of the chamber was Peace." There was the same sense of spaciousness, of complete and sympathetic understanding, in his talk that there was in his discourses. He dwelt at a height where all differences are reconciled. Never was there the slightest intrusion of his own point of view to hinder his comprehension of another's, however limited or even hostile that might be. Hostility, indeed, did not thrive in his presence; it found no air to breathe. I am not implying that he offered no resistance to narrowness or rigidity; but they dwindled to their true proportions in the presence of his serene humanity and his divine charity. I well remember how youthful extravagance of expression or thought was shamed into sobriety by the quiet humor, the tranquil good sense, the touch of reality—one cannot use the word too often in connection with him—that characterized his speech. It would be to misunderstand him completely not to make a large place for humor in one's conception of him. It was never obtrusive, but it was never far off, a sweetening and healing presence. His letters abound in it, as in all the other qualities that I have been trying to describe. The same serenity and simplicity and breadth, the same sense of eternal values, the same gift of pithy, pregnant utterance that made his sermons and conversation so remarkable and so characteristic pervade his letters. They have a permanent value, like all that he did and said, because they deal freshly, originally, sincerely, with abiding things. "Yours for a hundred years," are the closing words of a letter with which he bids me welcome to the new century, and certainly a hundred years are not too many to measure the work of his spirit in the world. He seemed incapable of growing old,

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despite the physical infirmities of his later years. It will be remembered that the books with which he stirred the mind of his generation were not written until after he was fifty. On the thirty-first of December, 1911, he wrote: "I attained to seventy years the other day, but am surprised to find how little there is in it, after all that has been said. It is all the same as before, and I imagine I should feel much the same about it if it were a still higher number on the list. I have been teaching this autumn with all the old delight, and have had as joyfully as I ever had it the feeling that I was really imparting to my men what I had for them."

At this season and in days like these, it is inevitable that our minds should be much occupied by the problem of immortality. Amid the perplexity that surrounds it for most of us, the testimony of such a spirit as his is in the highest degree consoling and reassuring. Such passages as the following from his letters will prove, even more clearly than the noble discourse on Immortality, how serene was his conviction. No conviction less assured than this would have been consistent with his thought of divine things; no faith less august would be consistent with our thought of him.

"I well understand the questioning as to whether the dear dead do live on and see the light of love, but I cannot get away from the old conviction that they do. I have to leave the manner of it all unknown, and so it must remain, but the old hope of life and love abides, and it abides because God abides."

"Easter is a good day, into which more and more the exulting sentiment of immortal hope is gathering as the years go by. I have read in my own house this morning the sentences and collect which you will read a little later with the congregation in church. I believe in the spiritual victory of God in Christ; therefore I rejoice to stand today and make my confession in the fellowship of all in



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whom he has inspired the strength of hope, joining with all my heart in the testimony of love and praise."

CHARLES H. A. WAGER.

Oberlin College,  
Easter, 1918.



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## IMMORTALITY: A STUDY OF BELIEF\*

I have lately been conducting a class through some studies concerning Christian Belief. In dealing with the subject I had to tell them that belief is no single and unambiguous thing. Various matters and kinds of matters offer themselves to be dealt with under that single name, and the nature or process of belief is far from being the same with reference to them all. This variety in the sense of so practical and important a word may easily be a perplexing thing, and as a matter of fact the ambiguity has wrought much confusion in Christian thought. In the course of my work it occurred to me to make a sample study of belief, by which I might illustrate some of the different modes of believing, and some of the differences between different kinds of belief, with reference to the quality and value of the result. At the same time I might throw some helpful light upon the doctrine, or the great reality, which I used for illustration. When I was invited to address this club, it seemed to me that I could not do better than to treat you as theologues, and reproduce, in better form if possible, this endeavor toward clearness in theologues' thinking.

For the subject of this sample study of belief (not a model study, but only a study), take the very familiar question,

*Do you believe in immortality?*

Yes. The first impulse may be to answer Yes, off-hand, without special reflection on the sense in which the

\* Read in Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School, November 29, 1911, before the George B. Stevens Theological Club, and published in the *Yale Divinity Quarterly*, January, 1912.

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question is asked, or the field which it is intended to cover. But it is needless to say that such an offhand answer is really no answer at all. The question is not ready to be considered until it has been more closely defined, and relieved of something of its ambiguity. So before going further we must ask what we mean by it. Immortality for whom?

Immortality of all human beings, of course, you may reply. Very likely in your own mind you may take it for granted that you believe this: you inwardly acknowledge your acceptance of belief in immortality for all that is human. You may not be aware of any serious difficulty in believing this: to you it may seem most natural. In some lights it is easy to believe, easier than any modification of the great idea. But not in all lights. Not all persons find it easy to believe: some find it impossible. For various reasons modifications of the instinctive answer would be welcomed. Perhaps on reflection one who gave the instinctive answer would find some other belief more manageable and satisfactory. Perhaps, indeed, you are already believing in immortality in some other sense, and mean something else by your Yes. If you do not mean the immortality of all human beings, perhaps you mean that you believe in the immortality of the higher section of the race, the persons who make a reasonable success of life in this mortal world. You may feel that future life awaits those who develop personality enough to attain to it, those who become sufficiently organized and vigorous to lay hold upon a higher range of being. You may feel compelled to limit the candidates for immortality to those who are thoroughly successful here, saying with Matthew Arnold:

And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,  
From strength to strength advancing—only he,  
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,  
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

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These chief of men will rise to victorious advance, you may think, while the most of men, not having attained, sink back to nothingness. If you are viewing the matter as some Christians do, you may give the thought the form of conditional immortality, as it is called, or continued existence only for those who are saved by divine grace in Christ. Immortality, you may think, is not assured to all men by any gift of nature, but is included in the gift which is known as eternal life, conferred by God only through faith in Christ. Through the Christian experience men rise to immortality; but those who are not in Christ, having come to the end of their natural endowment and received nothing more, will simply cease to be.

Thus you may be able to say, "I believe in immortality," and be quite sure that you do so believe, while yet your affirmation is ambiguous and your belief ill-defined. And on further thought, when the various views are set before you, you may not find it so very easy to tell just where you stand, and whom you are ready to call immortal. You may feel the force of conflicting reasons, and for the time stand somewhat uncertain. But now, having taken note of this ambiguity, we will assume, for the purpose of the present hour, that you take the most familiar ground, and that when you say Yes you mean that you believe all men to be immortal. All are to live on beyond death.

Perhaps it will be helpful if I turn aside for a moment to say that I think you are right if you do mean this. I see no sufficient reason for believing in conditional immortality, or immortality conditioned upon faith in Christ. This belief wins some Christians, because it delivers them from their old belief in everlasting sin and punishment. I had a kinsman who welcomed it with joy on this ground. But it does not appeal to me as accordant with what I know of God, or of man. Before I could believe it the light of God's own revelation would have to

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illuminate it for me: the gospel itself would have to be arrayed on its side—which, so far as I can see, it is not. Nothing in the Christian conception of God gives it any help, or tends to render it credible. So I cannot take it in. As for Matthew Arnold's answer, immortality for those who rise to it by high attainment of personality and victory in this life, I can strongly feel the force of the considerations that are cited in favor of it. There is much to be said for it as an interpretation of the facts of life, and I do not wonder that it appeals to many. I am only too well aware of the almost insurmountable difficulties that beset the thought of immortality for all men. The thought is so vast as to be absolutely overwhelming, and it necessarily awakens questions far beyond my power to answer. Not because universal immortality is easy to believe in do I believe in it, for in some respects some form of limited immortality could be believed in far more easily. Yet on the whole I find that my heart and mind can rest in no limited conception. The very vastness that overwhelms me attracts and holds me, and in spite of all the difficulties I must affirm my belief in future life for all that is human. But I do not claim a full and faultless belief, nor do I expect you quickly to attain to one. I know that in proportion to the vastness of the fact, my faith in it is lacking in clear-cut distinctness. In proportion to the same vastness I know also that it lacks appropriate power as a controlling conviction in my life. But for this I do not blame myself so much, after all. Probably the defect is inevitable. I am too small for my belief. I shall have to rise to full belief in immortality through the growth of my soul in capacity for so vast a conception. Well do I know how deficient my present belief in immortality is; nevertheless it is a fact that I do believe in it in its broadest range, and not in any of the diminished forms in which it is offered to me.

This personal testimony may perhaps be helpful as we



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proceed, but now we will return from the digression. To our question, Do you believe in immortality? we will take the affirmative answer in the largest sense, meaning that you believe in immortality as a destiny that belongs to all human beings. But this only prepares the way for another question, which is,

*How do you believe in it?*

for there are various ways of approaching and holding this belief in immortality. At present I am studying it as a belief. So let me continue my catechism, and inquire how the belief came to you. I wish to consider from what quarter it has been urged upon you; and in connection with that inquiry I wish you to notice what various degrees of appeal, of force, and of value, it may have, according as it comes to you from this quarter or from that.

The first question must be, Do you take your belief in immortality as a belief that has come to you out of the past? Is it to you in some manner an inherited article of faith? Did it come to you without your seeking it or knowing where it came from?

This may well be so, without there being in it the least reproach to you or discredit to your belief. It is nothing to be ashamed of. First of all, we have been brought up in a Christian atmosphere that was saturated with the thought of immortality. How well I remember how the voice of Jesus and of his church through all the ages of Christian faith rang out upon the summer air one Sunday afternoon! I stood there beside an open grave, a boy holding my father's hand, awed by the solemn majesty of death, not knowing what was coming next, when suddenly the perfect silence was broken by the words, "I am the resurrection and the life: if any man believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

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How it thrilled me! A sense of the reality of the life beyond was driven deep home into my mind by that great utterance of truth and faith. So Christian faith has put its cumulative force upon many of us, nay, upon all of us more or less. We are born heirs to a certain degree of Christian faith in immortality whether we know it or not. And we are not to be blamed for being influenced by this inheritance, and the belief is not less worthy for being brought to us thus through influence, without its accompanying reasons.

But this is not the whole matter. Much more is true. The belief in immortality is borne in upon us in this manner from a field much vaster than the Christian past. Christianity is but of yesterday. In some form or other, and with more or less response of life to a great reality, the human race generally has believed in the future life, or the life unseen. Men have felt sure that there was a reality beyond all that was visible, and believed that the departed had entered upon that unseen existence: into it they have expected, too, that they themselves would soon be received. Very childish sometimes the thought has been, and sometimes more worthy of grown-up minds, but rarely if ever has it been absent from human experience. This has gone on for uncounted ages, and at present the sense of an unseen life comes to us as an heirloom, as it were, of humanity. It is delivered to us as nothing less than a racial tradition: it has been handed down in the substance of common feeling and thought from immemorial times, far beyond our farthest stretch of knowledge. It reaches us now as a normal assumption, on the ground of the common experience and conviction of mankind, and we seem born to take it for granted that death has no power to stop the continuity of life.

Perhaps you may find yourself believing in immortality in some such way as this. Your belief is a living thing,

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a part of yourself, and yet it may not rest upon any authority that you can quote, or be due to any definite reasons that you can give. You may be holding it because the belief, so to speak, runs in the human blood. Or you may prefer to say that the idea pervades the atmosphere of human life, so that when you breathe with natural breath you breathe it in. Or, dropping such imagery, you may point to the part of your own being in which the belief seems to have been nourished. It sprang up within your mysterious self. The immeasurable past has sent down its bequest to you, or rather its living gift, and it has flowed into your subconscious life. It is present now in that region which you never explore: you cannot explore it, but you know it as a region where vital thought and feeling have their intimate sources. That region of our being is full of ancestral bequests, which have become living inheritances in us, although we have not the power to identify them in themselves. In their fruits we know them. Among these inheritances from the immemorial past is the sense of immortality.

When I have said this, I have placed the belief in immortality in a place of high honor, and also of enormous power. We do not have to apologize to anyone else, or to our own souls, for entertaining it. Such a belief is no merely personal or individualistic thing, gotten up for one's own use or comfort. To us of this late day it is not far from being a part of our human endowment; not an inseparable part, perhaps, but yet an element closely attached to our very life. We do not have to adopt it, it adopts us. It is by a process quite legitimate that it becomes a part of our very selves. Evidently a belief thus grounded should have immense power to influence life. Its influence is the greater because it is put forth not through any indirect process, such as reasoning, but rather through feeling, which strikes into life and soul directly. As a matter of fact, the belief is sensitive to

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reasoning, and may easily be rendered less at home in the soul by arguments for it, as well as by arguments against it. It likes to be an instinctive thing, and sometimes shrinks beneath the light of inquiry. But it is plain to be seen that the age-long sense of a future beyond death must be an immensely powerful thing. The conditions of its being make it one of the most impressive and influential forces in the world. There is not any belief in immortality anywhere that has not in this ancestral sense a powerful reinforcement: or perhaps it would be truer to say that in this immemorial conviction all our more special beliefs in immortality are rooted, and that out of its soil they would scarcely flourish.

Of course it is not meant that this ancient conviction always maintains the belief in its worthiest forms. Much influence of a childish character came down from long ago. We inherit effect from views undefined, and visions neither clear nor lofty. These inherited influences must come under judgment when the time comes, and some of them will be judged unworthy to hold their place, and will give way to better forces. So far as the transmitted sense of immortality brings us impulses unworthy of our manhood, they must be corrected. But the large and general belief is a good gift of God. Before we are through we shall see how well it fits into the worthy scheme of life that we have learned from Jesus to apprehend. If you cherish a sense of another life as a contribution from humanity, you do well.

We come to another manner of believing in immortality, modern in its form, and yet having much in common with more primitive conceptions. Continuing my catechism, I ask, Do you believe in immortality as something that has been proved, or partly proved, or at least commended to you, by evidence of the senses? Do you think the other world has come over into this to vindicate its own existence?

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Many years ago I was strolling through a New England town while waiting for a train, and passed the door of a hall where a workingmen's Lyceum held its meetings; and there I read the question that was to be debated when next they met: "Resolved, that the phenomena of modern spiritualism demonstrate the immortality of the soul." Evidently there were some in that town who thought that spiritualism had closed the case, by bringing the departed into immediate communication with the living. At one time there were many who thought the proof was perfect. I suppose there are not so many now, but there are some. Others, though not convinced of so much as that, still are impressed, and feel that something toward proof has been accomplished; while still others are haunted by the feeling that the evidence is perhaps sufficient and ought to convince them. And indeed if the evidence is good at all it is very good, so far as it goes. If the thing has been done, the point is proved. One genuine communication positively established would make it certain that one human being had survived death, and would create a presumption that others had done the same. Our beloved comrade George A. Gordon has said, in substance, that the reported communications, if they were genuine, would indicate that there is hope for all, since they would show that some of the very weakest had gotten safely across. There have been recent claims, much more respectable than the average claims of spiritualism. One cannot read the recent reports of Mr. Stead in London without feeling that his story is probably the best that has yet been told. The question is a question of fact, and some are satisfied with the evidence. Perhaps you may believe in the other life on some such grounds; or at least your conviction of it may have been reinforced by such experiences or reports.

Or, apart from the ordinary spiritualism, you may be influenced by the modern work that goes by the name of



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Psychical Research. Men of scientific mind have undertaken to put this question of fact thoroughly to the test. With all candor and faithfulness they have tried to find out whether the departed have really spoken back out of another world into this. They have sought most carefully to shut out all fraud and deception, which have crept in so often under the name of spiritualism. They have been equally anxious to eliminate all sources of error, so far as that could be done; and the modern psychology shows the possibilities of mistake in this field to be far greater than used to be suspected. They have tried so to work that what they really learned they could be wholly sure of. Under these rigidly guarded conditions they have sought communications from the unseen world. The result is that some of them think that they have convincing evidence of actual communication with certain selected spirits, proving that they live on, preserve their characteristics, and retain knowledge of certain matters that were known to them in this life. Some think thus, but others of them are not so ready to claim that the case is perfectly clear.

Of such endeavors we must say that they are perfectly legitimate. Spiritualism is a perfectly proper thing, if only it is true. In fact, I am not sure that spiritualism does not deserve rather better than it has received from Christian people; for, notwithstanding all the crimes and crudities that have been associated with it, it has done something toward keeping alive in a materialistic time at least a dim sense of life beyond. And as for the Society of Psychical Research, its endeavors are certainly legitimate. It is quite credible that it may prove the reality of the other life, and we must receive the evidence if it is really obtained. If it brings the other world nearer to our belief, and gives us new light as to what is going on there, we shall have reason to be thankful. We need

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have, and should have, no prejudice whatever against this mode of seeking evidence of immortality.

But what shall we think of the quality, the value, the power, of evidence of another life obtained in such a way? What nature and efficiency will belong to a belief in immortality thus certified to the senses, and to the mind through the senses? I am sure we must say that the belief in another life to which such evidence gave rise might naturally be a very clear and positive one. It would rank with other beliefs that are substantiated by tangible evidence. It would resemble our beliefs about the most earthly matters. It would have similar standing with my present belief in the reality of the city of Peking, which I have never seen, but to which a friend of mine has gone, from whom I receive an occasional letter. In such proof there is nothing spiritual. I would not call it materialistic, but it is external, ministered through the senses, and weighed only in the scales of the intellect. Such a belief would not be among those that are born of the soul: it would not have sprung up in response to the soul's own nature or needs or aspirations. Some beliefs grow up out of an inward necessity, but this would be nothing more than an external product. Plainly to a belief thus originated the strongest constraining power cannot belong. It may be clear-cut and definite, and it may be convincing in a high degree; but we cannot feel that it could be in an equal degree inspiring. It may indeed become associated with the world of internal feeling: it may even become associated with religious feeling, although it has grown up apart from religion and has essentially nothing in common with it. Through association with the vital powers of the soul such a belief may obtain a certain amount of vital influence. But it is impossible to think of a belief in immortality grounded in spiritualism or in *Psychical Research* as occupying a place among the primary vital forces that sway the soul and

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dominate the life. Beliefs that are to do such work may be confirmed from without, but need to have sprung up within.

Another manner of believing in immortality may have appealed to you. I remember hearing a solemn academy student declaim a poetical extract, I think from Addison. It was the poet's meditation on immortality, which he apparently accepted after doubts, and it began,

Plato, it must be so: thou reasonest well.

Do you believe in immortality as something that has been thought out, or reasoned through? Is the belief in your mind the result of argument, formal or informal, so that you think of it as something proved? Are its roots in philosophy, or in metaphysics, or in some endeavor after demonstrative operation? Perhaps you yourself have argued for it, constrained it may be by doubt, or by wonder, or by the vital sense of need: or perhaps you have been influenced by the reasonings of others. Perhaps in bereavement you have studied arguments, for the reinforcement of your confidence.

We are all influenced more or less by reasonings in this field. It is very true that arguments have often been framed that amount to nothing. It used to be argued, as I remember, that the soul could not be put out of existence because it was immaterial, and the immaterial is indestructible. But that was only exploiting our own ignorance and calling it argument. It is also true that no argument can suffice to demonstrate immortality. A genuine demonstration is such a procedure that after it no sane mind can fail to accept the conclusion. The long and anxious experience of mankind in looking toward another life is enough to show that no such argument has ever been available for human use. The confidence that men have had in another life has not come from such a source. And when we consider the field in which the



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question moves, we feel at once that it is not a region in which demonstration can possibly be effective. There is no way to construct a demonstrative argument that shall sustain so vast a conclusion. Apart from all considerations of the spiritual range of the thought, the mere extent of the idea of immortality puts it beyond the reach of the demonstrative method. We must get our certainty, if we are to have it, in some other way. Nevertheless we are all much influenced by what may properly be called reasonings on the subject. We are, and we well may be. There is much reasoning that is irrepressible, and much that is helpful. The case resembles that of the existence of God. That greatest of realities cannot be demonstrated, and yet there are many reasonings that lead us toward it and help us in rising to it.

Some reasonings on immortality would seem to the common man to belong to the schools; that is, they imply the conscious use of philosophical considerations and methods. But they may be less special than they appear, and more like the common man's mental operations. Works of the schools do not necessarily form a class by themselves. As it seems to me, the chief testimony of philosophy toward immortality is borne in the work that philosophy does in greatening the conception of man. Philosophy does greaten the living humanity. Directly and indirectly, it exhibits the greatness, the dignity, the majesty, of human powers. It well knows how far man is from perfection in his own kind, and how far from the ideal of his being; yet it does set him forth in a magnitude that powerfully commends him as a candidate for a more adequate life than this. It sets before us a humanity that transcends all present conditions of its being, and thus helps us to expect for it a wider scope and a longer range of opportunity. Of the question of immortality philosophy has long been mindful, as indeed it was

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bound to be; and while it has no minute predictions to offer, it ranks high among the prophets.

But, as I have intimated, its forecast is not so unlike that of the common mind as the common mind may imagine. The informal reasonings that influence us most in favor of immortality are flashes of confidence that rise up out of our sense of the greatness of humanity. Perhaps you will think I ought not to call them reasonings: quite as much they are irrepressible suggestions of life reaching out to demand its native right. These of course are the property of the common man, quite as much as of any specialist. They belong to life. What! this mere span of time the whole? this short day enough for a being like man? this life of limited opportunity adequate to his native needs? the satisfaction that he finds here all that is meant for him? this imperfect state the final state? Is the highest product of time destined only to extinction? These and a multitude of questions burst out from the common heart, and they are not only questions, they are arguments. They plead for more as the proper conclusion for that which now is. They do not clamor for particular forms of the future, or specify precisely what must be had, but they do rise to demand more than this life gives as the rational right of such a creature as man has proved himself to be. There is no reasonable defense, they claim, for such a creature stopping short and being no more forever. They are calls of the heart, but reason joins in them, and they ask for mankind the reasonable privilege of going on, and fulfilling itself in a larger life.

As formal arguments, these appeals are not so very formidable to our fears. Their strength lies rather in their informality, their naturalness, their indifference to regularity. They are the risings of conscious humanity to claim an adequate portion. Here it is interesting to note how they are related to that primitive sense of immortality of which we spoke at first. The claim for im-

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mortality of which we are speaking now is that primeval sense of immortality rationalized, explained, accounted for to the mind of humanity itself. Of old there was a vague and instinctive sense of another life: but now humanity, becoming aware of what it is, cries out in a thousand voices, "This is what I was made for, and I cannot do with less." This is the vital point of the reasoning that confirms our hope.

It is worth while to notice how the argument from the greatness of man has been confirmed in our time from an unexpected quarter. Not long ago it was feared that the modern evolutionary idea would degrade man by tracing him back to lower origins, and would so cut off all higher connections as to leave his immortality a wild dream. But the case is turned about. The ruling idea in the modern thought is not the tracing of man down to lower life. On the contrary, it is the tracing of lower life up to man. The result is a greatening of the human. At the summit of a terrestrial process so long that imagination gives it up, and so complicated and full of risks that it is marvelous that any rational result emerged without wreck, stands human personality. It is a splendid crown for the amazing process. From life personality has been unfolded. To the very beginnings of life the unfolding of it can be traced back, and of the age-long development of life it is the fruit. Before we knew its antecedents we knew that personality was great enough to have immortality for its normal outlook. Now that we understand it better, the length, the elaborateness, the difficulty, of the gestation from which human personality has been born brings fresh enhancement to the greatness of humanity. Surely we may predicate permanence of a product thus obtained. Is a personality obtained through this marvelous and painful process of evolution to be a thing of an hour's duration, with no prospects or uses beyond this moment of time? Is it to have no develop-

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ment beyond the infancy which it here attains? Who can believe it? The evolutionary view of life adds its voice to the many voices that are lifted up to claim for man the reasonable right of immortality.

If you believe in immortality in this manner, you are coming on. If your own nature is a premise to which immortality is the conclusion, you have something that goes far toward the heart of the matter. The reasoning is informal, but it is grounded in the nature of things.

The next question leads us into another region. It is, Do you believe in immortality as a fact attested by the Bible? Do you hold it on the strength of biblical testimony and authority?

Christians very generally have held the great belief on this ground. At least they have understood themselves to be doing so. As a matter of fact they have held it partly on the authority of the Bible, and partly for the large reasons that have led men in general to hold it. But Christians have recognized the biblical basis of their belief more clearly than the other bases. Besides, the appeal of the biblical considerations has been felt more warmly than the appeal of ancient inheritance or the manifest destiny of human nature. In this way it has come to pass that most Christians have built their everyday hope very largely on the Bible.

You may have felt the decisive influence of the Bible in any of various ways. Perhaps you are convinced that the Bible teaches immortality in plain and unmistakable terms, so that you have only to read and accept its testimony. Christians have acted upon this conviction, citing texts from the Bible to support their faith. Often, as we know, they have quoted the Bible indiscriminately, using its utterances as of equal authority throughout. In this way they have often built an earnest hope on texts that did not properly support it; while at the same time they were using other statements of the highest worth. You

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may have passed on from such indiscriminating use of the Bible, and may be depending upon utterances of Christ himself and spiritual unfoldings of his spiritual thought, affording warm Christian testimony to the immortal hope. You may feel that in its constant teaching the Bible implies the other life so thoroughly as to teach it just as decisively as if its terms were much more definite than they are. Your eyes may glow as you look upon the hopes to which the Bible points you, and you may shudder at the fears to which it calls the attention of men. Contemplating thus its outlook upon destiny, you may feel that the hopes, the fears and the general outlook all sweep the field of immortality just as truly as the field of the present life. You may be sure that they could not possibly be what they are if they did not assume the future existence of all souls. Thus you may feel that your belief in immortality is justified by the large revelation which God has made in Jesus Christ and preserved in the Bible.

Among the forms of the belief that we have mentioned, this is the first one that we can distinctly call religious. Not because it is grounded in the Bible. The source of a belief does not determine how religious it is to be. In the primitive sense of immortality there is doubtless something religious, and there may be much. Religion may enter into any of the beliefs that we have mentioned: certainly it should enter into the belief that springs from our sense of the greatness of man and his kinship with immortal destinies. But on the other hand a belief that is founded on authoritative statements is not necessarily a religious belief. Authority that can be cited in words and brought to bear through quotations is essentially external to the soul. Being founded in the Bible does not render a belief vital to him who holds it. If God should write his testimony to your immortality here upon the wall before you, and you knew that the handwriting was



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his and the testimony came straight from him, still it would be quite possible for you to go your way to your merchandise or to your sin, knowing that you had read God's record but bearing no conviction of immortality in your soul. A belief must be vitalized by living divine connections before it can be a living religious belief. God must be in the belief itself.

But the belief in immortality that Christians have drawn from the Bible has been a religious belief; and the reason is that the deference for the Bible has been a deference for God. The Bible has never been an independent authority. Only because its testimony was accepted as the testimony of God has it been accounted authoritative. The faith that was founded in the Bible became a religious faith because the Bible represented—not was—the supreme authority. It was the sense of God in the book that made the texts sacred and rendered their testimony precious. Once every word in the book was taken to be his direct utterance, and then the seemingly solid foundation of authority was broad. By and by, when the human element in the Bible was discerned, the field was narrowed, and altered, too. From uncertain foundations, the belief in immortality was driven home to its congenial place, the utterance and spirit of Jesus, revealing God and man. Through all these stages of its history the confidence in immortality that rested on the Bible has always been animated by the spirit and power of religion, and has stood as a profoundly religious belief. Whether the testimony has been found to be formal or informal, specific or general, "Thus saith the Lord" has been the justifying word. "Thus saith the Lord, there is life beyond."

To say this is to utter a commonplace, so well known is it that the biblical belief in immortality has been gifted with the power of religion. It is in the sight of God, and through trust in God, that the confidence has been

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held. And it is another commonplace that the biblical belief in immortality has been an immensely powerful thing for inspiration and uplift to actual life. It has been an undying hope, full of the brightness of a glorious expectation, "So shall we be ever with the Lord." From it, therefore, in all Christian ages, have proceeded strength and consolation of unspeakable worth. From the same belief has proceeded warning also, exceedingly solemn; for evil men as well as good have been made to feel that the significance of their character took hold on endless destiny. Like all human beliefs, this one has had its imperfections, sometimes very serious; but its power upon life is too plain to be doubted, and its great beneficence lies too near the heart to be forgotten.

All this is as we should expect. What should have power upon life if not a great expectation, grounded in testimony of God? Its quality is heavenly, however injured by human imperfection, and its efficiency is divine.

This might seem to be the end of the matter, but it is not. I must speak of one more way of believing in immortality. This mode is not altogether distinct from the others, but may be reached through them, or illustrated in any of them. Really, it is the life of the others, so far as they are truly living things. Nevertheless this way of believing stands by itself, and deserves by itself to be considered. The question that opens it is, Do you believe in the immortal life as a spiritual reality?

This may seem a vague and indefinite designation, but I hope we may find it clear enough. If we have ever thought of immortality with deep seriousness, we already know in general what it means. The present question is not, Where does your belief in immortality come from? or, How do you defend it? but, Of what sort is it? How does immortality appeal to you, and what does it mean to you? How does it take hold of you? What is it to your

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soul? This is the question that goes deepest, so far as personal belief is concerned. Immortality may offer itself to you as something that must be true if all highest things are true. Better than that, you may feel that immortality must be true *since* all highest things are true. The second of all great realities it may be to you, God the first and immortality the next—and it may appeal to you and be real to you in something like due proportion to this its high position.

It is impossible to tell in how many ways this conception may be borne in upon you. But there are two great modes, of which one is negative and the other positive. You may feel that without immortality all is vain or disappointing; and on the other hand you may be impressed with the living sense of an immortality that crowns, completes and honors all. I cannot keep these two conceptions apart: they flow into each other. In one aspect you may believe in immortality as a spiritual reality that must be: in the other, as a spiritual reality that is, and is glorious.

I have spoken of the cries which are instinctive reasonings, whereby humanity claims its immortal portion. Here they spring up in power. Immortality may dawn upon you as the great necessity: it must be real if the present life is to be a life indeed—not only that its mysteries may be cleared up and its inequalities corrected, but because present life itself is too great to be its own all. You may seem to see all best significances and highest hopes sinking into nothingness if this their true glory be withdrawn. You may be thinking of persons, perhaps unspeakably dear to you, whose extinction would seem to be as criminal as it is incredible. Or you may think of humanity in general, composed of persons in whom alone its unimaginable wealth of power and possibility can come to fulfillment; and it may be borne in upon you, not as a logical conclusion but as a wave of sympathetic conviction



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and aspiration, that to this personal greatness immortality alone corresponds. You may feel that your human heart would mourn inconsolably over man as incomplete, if his range were limited to the life that now is: you may feel yourself struggling along with the struggle of the universal spirit out toward larger scope. In such manner the fitness of the immortal life may overshadow you, and its reality as a spiritual necessity may so impress you that you become as sure of the future as you are of the present.

Then you may think of God, of his greatness, his eternity, his love, his nearness of heart to man, as all this has been brought home to us in Jesus Christ; and with this thought of God in mind you may catch a glimpse of man whom you love, as akin to God in the spiritual nature that he bears. God you love, and man you bear upon your heart; and now, in your vision of God, you have found a solid foundation for your high hope of man. The everlasting world which man needs is not a dream: it exists, and it is not vacant. God is there. In the world to which man aspires, God exists eternal. In the region where man craves to live, his Father is, the Being upon whom his being even now reposes. When you thus discern the God of all spirits in the world invisible, you see how normal it is for human spirits to rise thither and find the destiny that befits them. You have not reasoned it out, you are simply discerning the fruition of the human hope, in discerning God. Then you remember that God has shown himself to us in saving love, with the intent that man may be delivered out of all evil bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Upon this you perceive with joy that the whole great scheme of existence corresponds together. Man aspiring to immortality is aspiring into the bosom of his Father, and his Father is there to receive him. God taking hold upon man to bring him to his true self and service is undertak-

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ing a task unlimited. But for the task he has unlimited room and opportunity, for man is a being whose range runs on through all the duration that God can need. Contemplating man thus not in himself alone but in his relation to his God, you may soar at once above the thought of him as mortal. That thought may quite vanish in the vision of a life adequate to his best self and possibilities, and sufficient for the creative purpose of his God. In immortality God will bring man to the end for which he first designed him and will use him for all the high purposes to which his nature is adapted.

There are more ways to believe than one. This glimpse of high belief in immortality lets us into one of the highest modes of believing. Perhaps there is no other belief so lofty in its nature as this except the highest belief in God, which imparts its own greatness to other spiritual beliefs. Of course we cannot believe everything in such a manner: lower modes for lower matters, and lower modes, as we have seen, are sometimes useful in high matters. We have seen belief in immortality brought to pass through ancestral influence, through testimony to the senses, through reasonings, through deference to authority, through spiritual insight and conviction. May the day come when the highest evidence shall have the greatest weight with the sons of men, made for immortality.

## MYSTERY IN RELIGION

THE ANNUAL OPENING ADDRESS BEFORE HAMILTON  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1896

Our Seminary once more opens its doors to welcome us, and we come, old friends and new together, to sit down in this quiet place and learn the truth. This is our purpose here, this and nothing lower: to learn together as we may the living and powerful truth of God. The end of our presence here is not the studying of books, the learning of languages, the acquiring of methods, the mastering of systems. All these are means rather than ends, steps that may be important but are not final. We are here to learn the truth of God concerning religion, and the best way of using it for the practical ends of the gospel. Let us set this high aim distinctly before us at the beginning, and take the oath of allegiance to it here tonight. No lower aim is worthy of us, and none should any man of us for a moment entertain. Humbly, fearlessly, and hopefully, we must set ourselves to learn the truth of God and the way to use it. May God keep us loyal to this high endeavor.

The field of our study we call the field of Theology—for are we not, teachers and students together, a theological seminary? Yet this name does not tell the exact truth about our calling. Our field is the field of religion. Theology is a study, but religion is an experience. Theology is a science, but religion is a life. Theology is the study of religion, and when we study theology we are studying religion. I cannot stay to prove or illustrate this

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at present, but I offer it as a fact that gives great light upon the character of our work. Students of religion are we—students not of a system merely but of an experience; not of a science but of a life. We are students of the life of man in fellowship with God. How gloriously does this conception of our theme broaden our field and enrich the subject of our study! No limits confine us here. All that pertains to the life of man in fellowship with God lies within our field, and all the charm and richness of experience come in to fascinate us as we bend over our work. No study is so full of vitality and power as this study of religion itself, the noblest, profoundest and most enduring element in the life of man: and to this study we are now to give ourselves. Within these walls we study the living God and the living humanity; we study God's revelation and man's experience; God's providence and man's religious history; God's salvation and man's destiny; God's call of grace and the most useful ways of serving God and man in holy ministry. These are living themes of religion itself; and we must all think of ourselves here as students not merely of theology, but of religion.

In preparation for our work, I shall speak tonight of one element in religion of which all men have had experience, and with which we shall constantly have to do—I mean the element of *Mystery in Religion*. It is an ever present element, now darkening and now glorious, now perplexing and now full of inspiration. We cannot be students without meeting it, and upon the manner in which we learn to deal with it will depend much of our success. Let us think of it tonight.

Need I attempt to define Mystery? It is better to illustrate it. We all know how we come upon it, and with what sensations we meet it. When we begin to study, it is easy to assume that we are to find what we seek—and we seek clear knowledge. If we are successful, we

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shall obtain definite results that we can put into clear statements. This seems a reasonable expectation, and one without which we might scarcely be willing to study—for what other result would duly reward our labor? Begin, then, with this expectation. Investigate your facts, in any field of study. You accomplish what you hoped. Certainty does not elude you. Clear statements you obtain. Suppose that you are working in the science of Physics, and reach the clear and certain law that bodies attract one another in proportion to their mass, and inversely according to the square of their distance. What can be clearer than that? or more mysterious? Bodies? What are bodies, that they should attract one another? What is the attractive power? whence came it, and where does it reside? You have described the mode of operation of some power that lies far beyond your searching. When will you be ready to report in plain terms upon this something that you have described in its working but not defined? Your solid statement rests upon a foundation of mystery, of which, search as you may, you can find neither bottom nor end.

This is a good illustration of mystery, and it may serve us better than a definition. What we have thus found in one place, we find everywhere. We speak of the mystery of life, in tree or plant, in insect or in man; of the mystery of electrical force; of the mystery of the union of soul and body; of the mystery of the will; of the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's freedom; of the mystery of the incarnation; of the mystery of the new birth; of the mystery of death and immortality; of the mystery of the Trinity; of the mystery of a blade of grass. In all these cases, diverse as they are, we mean by the word essentially the same thing, and it is substantially what we meant when we found the mystery of attractive force drawing bodies together: we mean that the subject of our thoughts is greater than any statements



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than we can make about it; that after all has been said, when all our knowledge has been well laid out and classified, there is a vast deep stretching away beneath and beyond; that the subject of our thought is beyond our grasping, and we see no way to make it otherwise. Even concerning the knowledge that we possess and are able to make good use of, we are compelled to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Not that the sense of mystery is always encountered in the same manner, or awakens the same sensations. There are at least two forms of experience about it, and of these we need to think. Sometimes we feel that the facts are simply too great for us; and sometimes we are startled and perplexed to find that the facts seem to us inconsistent with one another. The sense of mystery is sometimes the simple sense of the surpassing greatness of the things with which we have to do, and sometimes the dreadful sense that these great things do not harmonize together, but contradict one another and are irreconcilable. The one name of mystery covers these two things, widely though they differ. When we ask what makes the heart keep beating, what keeps the blood aflow, how vocal organs convey thought from mind to mind, we answer that these matters are veiled in mystery, and the answer is true. But by this confession we are not troubled, we are only awed, and thrilled with wonder, and impelled to seek deeper for understanding of the matter, if by any means we may come to know it through and through. In the realm to which we give the general name of science, this is the interpretation that we oftenest give to mystery; it is the veil of greatness, that hides from us the full meaning of the things that we are bending over. Mystery thus viewed does not trouble us, but lures us on; we desire to dispel it for our own satisfaction, and yet we can endure it with full contentment. Mystery, we

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feel, is the inseparable companion of our ignorance ; if it always remains, that will simply mean that the universe is too vast for us, and its meaning too deep for our comprehension. But in the realm of religion our experience is apt to be different. When we ask (to take an illustration familiar beyond almost all others) how it is that God is God indeed, with that control over his works which he must have if he is true God at all, and man is nevertheless that free and responsible being which he knows himself, and which religion itself requires that he must be, we answer still that these matters are veiled in mystery, but we do not say it in the same tone as before. Our tone is often troubled. The two things seem incompatible. One of the two, God's sovereignty or man's freedom, perhaps one and perhaps the other, may appear to us certainly and necessarily true, while the other seems inconsistent with it. Yet both seem taught us by highest authority, and both seem necessarily a part of the world that God made and man lives in. This we call a mystery—a mystery, namely, that two things should seem incompatible and yet both be true. In the realm to which we give the name of religion, mystery is the name that is often given to the heartbreaking sense of the reality of the impossible. Things contradictory coexist, and this is mystery, and mystery dark and troublesome.

Hence in the world of religion there has often been resort to a relief that in the world of science has never been sought. In religion it has sometimes been taught that mysteries that troubled us and seemed insoluble were matters that lay above reason, or beyond reason. It has not been admitted that they were contrary to reason, but that they were above it or beyond its field has often been proposed as a relief to our perplexity.

This proposal for relief will prove our best guide into the truth concerning mystery in religion, and what it really is. If we see in what sense this is wise counsel and



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in what sense it is not, we shall be better able to estimate mystery. Now at the outset we must hold it fast, as a thing eternally certain, that in the universe of God there is absolutely nothing that is either above reason or beyond reason. When we are told that any mystery of his universe is above reason or beyond it, we are told what is not true. God is himself the perfect and eternal reason. His work is rational. The universe is an expression of the eternal reason. When we find something that we cannot understand, it is not open to us to say that here something has slipped in that rational processes cannot account for. Nothing that exists in any world is to be explained by releasing it from under the sway of reason. This we must hold fast forever. But we may freely admit that some mystery that we have encountered is above our reason or beyond our reason, in its present state and with its present data. Some mystery may even present facts that are against reason, or irrational, to us today, with our untrained powers and limited knowledge. The most reasonable truth may be unreasonable to a mind that does not see it in full true light. To us, narrow, childish and untaught, with scant sympathy with the eternal mind and heart in its infinite reasonableness, many things may be beyond rational explanation for the present, which we have only to see as they are, to call them very truths of the eternal reason.

Perhaps this is what is meant, when things mysterious in religion are declared to be above reason or beyond it. Perhaps it is meant simply that they are now beyond or above the human reason that is seeking to understand them. If this, which is often true, is what is meant, this is what ought to be said; for it is most misleading and dangerous to use language that seems to declare anything in God's world to be essentially beyond the field of reason. To affirm such a thing is to deny that the eternal reason has universal sway, and thus to leave ourselves in mental

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darkness from which there is no relief till this denial is withdrawn. To limit the field of reason is to limit the field of God. Mystery is not to be relieved by saying that God has no dominion over it.

The truth is, that mystery in religion is like mystery in science, or anywhere else. Let us breathe the secret. The mystery always seems to reside in the thing that is studied, but it does not. The cause of the mystery resides in the mind that is studying. Mystery is the effect of greatness upon minds that are unequal to it, or are insufficiently informed.

Do not doubt this, but behold it illustrated and confirmed. We speak of the mystery of life in ourselves, of the union of mind and body, the nature of the vital process, the meaning of that dissolution which we call death. We confess that we have no key to the mystery, and probably shall not find one; life eludes the living, and how it is that we live we are not likely to know. But never for a moment do we doubt that there is a rational explanation of the mystery somewhere. We know that life is rational; that there is no essential mystery in life itself, or in the union of body and soul, or in the great dissolution; that these realities all have their method, which is absolutely a reasonable method, and one that rational powers, even our own, could grasp, if it were fully placed before them. We, with our childish powers and training and our fragmentary knowledge, do not hold the clue for rational interpretation, but we know that there is a clue. The mystery has its cause in us.

Or, look at what we call a most mysterious element in external nature, electricity. We watch the play of this marvelous agent, rending the sky in the lightning, coloring the north in the aurora borealis, carrying man's messages in the telegraph and his voice in the telephone, bringing him light and heat and tractive energy, moving

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through all nature, doing things most unexpected and accomplishing what seemed impossible; and we stand awed, excited, quivering with eagerness, before the mystery of this weird invisible, enemy and friend at once to man. But we never for a moment imagine that there is any real mystery about it, mystery essential and insoluble. We know that electricity has its method, as strict and invariable, as rational and right, as the method of any other element in the universe. We know that both its nature and its working would be perfectly intelligible to any rational mind that had the due range of power and information. The secret of all mystery that we find in electricity lies in us, and in our ignorance.

These illustrations, one from nature and one from life, agree in confirming this, that what God has made is rationally plain, but is mysterious to us because it is too great for us. Our subject this evening, mystery in religion, provides a third illustration, to precisely the same effect. Mystery in religion is like other mystery; it arises from imperfect understanding of what is rational and intelligible enough, but is too great for us at present to understand. Hear now the word of the Lord concerning the things that he has made. All things in the universe of God are rational, plain and free from mystery, provided only there is a mind great enough to comprehend them and judge them as they are. It is a straightforward, honorable universe, conducted according to eternal reason by the holy and gracious God. To the one Mind that is great enough to comprehend it, it contains no mysteries. But to our minds, only just now created in God's image, untrained to high thinking and unexperienced in the noblest love, it is a realm of mystery. It is too great for us, and mystery is our name for its greatness beyond our range. The secret of the mystery lies not in that which God has made, which to him is abso-

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lutely clear and plain, but in the limitation of our powers and knowledge.

In this light we can understand the two effects of mystery already mentioned, one sad and perplexing, the other inspiring and joyful. We look upon things too great for us to comprehend, and they seem not to agree well together. Contradictions appear to us inherent in the universal frame. The mystery alarms us, for we cannot find the unity that is indispensable to rest for our souls. This is one result. But on the other hand we may be charmed by the mystery that hangs as a veil over all things great, and over all things because all are great. We gaze because of what we clearly see, and not less because every look suggests far more than it reveals. Seeing so much more beyond, we glow with hope of what may yet be opened to us. This is the other result. Both are intelligible, when once we know what mystery really is.

But the same knowledge teaches us that one of these results should be temporary, while the other abides forever. Mystery of contradiction, with all its power to afflict our souls, fades away in presence of settled belief in the rationality of God. The rationality of God is an eternal guaranty against the existence of essential contradictions in that which he has made: and settled belief in the divine rationality has inexpressible power to soothe and heal the troubled soul. When we have learned this lesson, and are sure that God has produced no essential and insoluble mysteries, since his eternal reason reigns supreme, then we may drop our fears of mystery, as if it might be fatal to our peace, and permit it to be the glorious thing that God intends. Well knowing God our Father, we part company with the heartbreaking mysteries, even though the facts that forced them on us still remain. Do we ask—to turn at once to the greatest of them all—whether the problem of evil must not darken

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all our days? We answer that it is a problem dark and terrible, to questioners who stand where we stand, able to see so small a section even of this present human world, ignorant of so much that is known to God. We confess that the problem of evil is too great for us, and is dark enough to darken all our day. But we add this to our answer, that to God there is no problem of evil. He understands. To him, this whole field lies open, clear and plain. Surely we do not doubt it? We do not think that he too is like one of us, in the dark about his own work, not understanding what he has in hand? To think this is to deny that he is God at all. Faith rises to affirm that to the eternal reason the problem of evil is all clear, and the world is worthy of God. When we believe this, the problem is changed for us. Evil is not changed, but we know that there is One who understands it: and we can go our way fighting it, free from the heartbreaking fear that this enemy may yet conquer our faith and lead us prisoners to the castle of despair.

For our present purpose, therefore, we may leave these mysteries of contradiction, and turn with swelling hearts to that realm where mystery in religion is either a veil upon glory, or glory itself. Concerning this mystery which is mystery of greatness—mystery of breadth and length and depth and height—I desire that we may reverently think together now. This field of unutterable wonder does not belong to religion alone. Mystery in religion is simply a department of universal mystery, and it has the same meaning as mystery everywhere.

I know how commonplace it is to say that mystery is everywhere. It has been said a thousand times, yet I may say it again, and for a moment I must dwell upon it. The fact is, that we shall not think rightly of mystery in the realm of religion, until we know by experience what it is to see mystery everywhere, and consciously to walk as men encompassed by it on every side. Walk up on a



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bright morning by the path that leads through the woods to the door of our Seminary, and tell me how many mysteries you have passed in coming: how many, I mean, of those things that may be perfectly familiar to you, indeed, but baffle you hopelessly if you seek to know them thoroughly. Lift your eyes to the sun, or let them fall upon the tiny moss beside the path. Think of the trees in their beauty, or of the decaying mould at their feet, or of the seed that the tree yields and the mould nourishes. Think of the insect life that is hidden away in the earth, or of the birds that sing in the branches. Hold up the mirror of thought to yourself, a spirit that sees and knows, and takes wondering note of all the life and beauty, and is aware of mysteries. Which of all these objects that you observe can you account for? Which can you expound as if you understood it? How far into any of them can you look? Some true things about them you can say, but how soon you reach your limit! Only notice what radical mysteries are here. You feel the mystery of life, to which you know no solution—life in tree, in insect and in man. Where there is life and where there is none, you come alike upon the mystery of matter, the problem what it is; and you cannot solve it. Whatever the object of your thought may be, living or not living, you encounter the great underlying, universal mystery of existence—how anything came to exist, and what existence signifies. Your walk through the woods is a walk through the world of mystery, and so is every walk that you ever take, in places strange or familiar, amid objects great or small: while meantime you carry in your own person all these mysteries—the mystery of existence, the mystery of matter and the mystery of life, together with the crowning mystery of the soul, able to estimate mysteries and seek to solve them. Thus full of mystery is the actual world in which we live. Not by invention do we find it so, but by discovery. Closed eyes

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do not see it, but when our eyes are open, behold, this is the world in which we are. We do not live according to truth until we see mystery everywhere, and our daily consciousness is pervaded by the sense of it.

As to the real nature and meaning of the universal mystery, our illustration from our own bit of wildwood will lead us to the truth concerning it, as well as any that we could discover. What is the mystery, ever present and ever eluding us, in this bit of forest? Need I speak the word? It is no other than the mystery of God himself. Here, as I have said, we encounter the mystery of life, the mystery of matter and the mystery of existence. What, and whence, is the life of tree and fern, of insect, bird and squirrel? What is the inorganic matter in our grove, and what qualities does it possess? and what fits it to serve as the organ and medium of life? And how came the whole into being? and what does its existence signify? Concerning all this we may have our theories of creation or evolution, as we find reason for them, but they do not go to the depths of the question. Life, matter and existence have their ground and source in God. The mystery that haunts our forest day and night is the mystery of God himself, of his activity, of his indwelling, of his relation to the things upon which we look. This is that mystery which eludes us, that unseen reality which underlies all that we see. How he is related to his creation, and his creation to him; how he touches the things that are, and holds them in being; what power and love flow forth from him into his works, and what he means by it all: these are the unanswered questions that look out upon us in our little forest, and everywhere we go. When we know all about God, we shall know all about this bit of wildwood, and only then. That underlying greatness which all nature shows us in glimpses but does not reveal is God himself.



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This oneness of mystery, the mystery of God in all, is what Tennyson has expressed in the well-known lines :

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

Nothing could be more true. One mystery underlies all things, and it is the mystery of God. This, we must now notice, is the same as to say that all mystery everywhere, in nature, life and mind, leads directly on into the heart of our subject this evening. All roads lead hither, to the mystery of the self-revealing God ; and this is the mystery of religion.

Note the difference, however. In religion, we meet the universal mystery in the region of the spirit. We are working in the realm where God moves farthest, if we may say so, toward his creation, and makes his closest approach to the highest creature that he has placed in the world. In religion we encounter the mystery of spiritual contact and influence. Religion rests upon the fact that "spirit with Spirit can meet"—man can commune with God, and God can dwell in man. Here we encounter the mystery of providence, the mystery of redeeming love and help, the mystery of spiritual intercourse, the mystery of transformation. Mystery in religion is the mystery of God and the soul together.

Concerning the depth of this spiritual mystery, I should be inclined to say two things. On the one hand, I should expect this mystery of God and the soul to be profounder than any other. If there is really any difference in mysteries and one is deeper than another, I should expect the deepest to be found where God, with the immensity of his spiritual resources, touches conscious, voluntary, responsible souls, intending to influence them and change

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their character. Compared with this, it seems to me, the work of God upon that which we call matter must be simple. His relation to matter is deeply wonderful, indeed: but the relation of the infinite Spirit to the finite spirit which it has created and is now befriending—a finite spirit free and responsible, and willful too—is still more deeply mysterious. And yet I should say, on the other hand, that the mystery of God's contact with the soul of man would be more intelligible than any mystery of God in matter. The contact of spirit with spirit is more intelligible than the contact of spirit with anything else. We may not be more able to explain it, but we have more in our own experience to illustrate it. We are on more familiar ground, and have more to guide our understanding, when we speak of God and man in fellowship, than when we speak of the mystery of God in nature. Here the relations are at least personal: and so the deepest mystery of God is after all the one on which we have the clearest light to help us. For this we may well give thanks.

Even more should we give thanks for the character of the mystery that we find in religion—I mean in religion as we know it in Jesus Christ. Mystery here is glorious and inspiring, for it is revealing mystery, mystery not so much of darkness as of light. It glorifies more than it obscures. In it we see things that prophets and kings, philosophers and scientists, have desired to see but have not seen them. In the light of it we see

‘Earth crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God.’

Only remember what the mystery is with which we are now concerned. When we speak of religion, we are moving in that realm in which God comes nearest. The great insoluble is no other than the question how he can come so near, and how things can be as they are in so

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close a presence of his gracious glory, and what new wonders his presence is destined to bring forth.

The real mystery of the spiritual contact of God with man is not mystery that suggests denial, or even doubt. It is not the stumbling, blundering wonder whether God has any spiritual contact with man. We know that he has. Spirit and spirit do meet. The life of religion is the life of our souls in such contact. To us, in Christ, the great fact is a living reality. We are not talking of an unanswerable question whether this can come to pass, but of the glorious mystery of the fact that this does come to pass, and of the mysterious glory that radiates from this truth and fills the world with the heavenly brightness of a living hope.

Think first of the mystery of God's self-revelation. That he does express himself to men; that he finds means of making himself known in humanity; that he was able to come in Jesus Christ, and make a revelation of his character full and clear, and tender, holy, glorious, a revelation such as man could never have imagined; that the unseen God stands thus manifest among us, showing in a human life what manner of God he is:—this is the real mystery of religion, so far as God's self-revelation is concerned. This is a glorious mystery for us to walk in, and to walk wondering. Do we ask how it occurred? by what process God was thus manifest in the flesh? and do we find that we cannot wholly explain it? Do we locate the mystery of God's revelation in the incomprehensibility of the incarnation? Is this the mystery that fixes our attention? It is true that here our explanations fail us, less or more, but we mistake if our chief wonder lies in this quarter. Mystery of this kind we can trust to the reasonableness of God. We know and are sure that he does only what the highest reason dictates. If we should never be able fully to solve the problem of the incarnation—which may well prove to be the case—we

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could rest in this, that what God does is absolutely rational, and there is nothing dark or perplexing in it, if only the whole were known. Of the fact that God has shown himself among men in Christ, we are certain: and the mystery that we have most to do with is the mysterious glory that hangs about this fact. In the presence of such a revelation we walk wondering. What glory and what wonder that God should come, and his tabernacle should be among men, and he should dwell among them! What a character is thus revealed! What heights and depths of glory does it contain! How dimly is it seen thus far, despite the clearness of his revealing! Who knows what light is yet to stream forth upon the world from that same face of Jesus Christ in which we see the glory? How divinely the light of that character irradiates all that it falls upon! How it solves the problem of life! How it opens new mysteries too, but only to bring in due time a divine solution! What superabundance of fullness there is in this revelation of God! what undeveloped possibilities of grace and truth and life! The latent possibilities of good in Christ lie before us with infinite attractiveness. We do not wish that we could see all there is in him. So winning a mystery is something to receive with thankfulness, and to wait upon with joyful hope.

Think also of the mystery of God's contact with the individual soul through the Holy Spirit. Here the life of personal religion begins, and in this realm it has its being. We might stand perplexed—as many do—because we could not tell how God is able to communicate thus secretly and powerfully with a human soul. The question moves in a region where we are ignorant. How one human soul acts upon another we do not know and are not likely to discover; much less how God acts upon a man. But here again we find our peace in the rationality of God. He will never violate the nature he has

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created, or in anything act against the perfect reason. We know that a solution of the mystery of spiritual influence exists, and is a perfect and reasonable solution, worthy of God. In other words, we know that there is no real mystery here, but only a mystery to our ignorance. But as to the fact itself, that God does touch the human spirit with a holy, friendly, renewing influence, and work in it the purpose of his grace—as to this we have no doubt; and this is a fact alive and glowing with mysterious energies. What a world of possibilities does it open, for us to wonder, pray and work in! A missionary was founding a new station on the Congo, and obtained the service of natives to bring him timber from the forest, to erect a house in which he might serve them in the Lord. Watching them at the work, he wrote, “How little do they suspect that after a time they will begin to be moved with strange troublings in the spirit, which they cannot cure for themselves but must be cured of by the invisible God, and that these inward movings will be connected with their bringing of these sticks to me!” He was contemplating the mystery of the present God, now working in the silence of the human soul. He was walking in the wonder of that glorious and inspiring mystery. Explain it? That was the least of his need. To glory in it, to see the world irradiated with the light of such possibilities as it suggests, and to promote the free working of this invisible but heavenly power: this is the use that should be made of a mystery divine. “The things that are impossible to men are possible to God”: this is the keynote of the new song. It is a note of mystery, for it declares the possibility of the impossible, through the working of a more than human agent. That new song of which this is the keynote is the song with which we may gladden day and night, if we do but learn what use to make of the mystery of the present God.

Turn for a moment to one of the analogies of nature.



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The mystery of God's spiritual touch upon man is very like the mystery of electricity as it stands today. Here is an element in nature, to which we have given a name, though we know little about it. Just what it is we may find out, but we are not waiting for that before we use it. It has already accomplished wonders under the hand of man, and stands ready to accomplish more. At present the question is, what it is to do next, and how far its revolutionary work is to go. When we speak of the mystery of electricity, we may refer to the unsolved questions as to its nature: but we may just as well refer to its possibilities. Here is a mighty agent: the world is full of it, and its energy is immeasurable. Oh, the mystery of such a force, evidently able to do far more than we have seen, ready whenever we are ready, to serve us by working new and unimagined wonders! Oh, the marvel of a world thus full of a tremendous energy! Oh, the wonder of the boundless possibilities! This mighty presence in the world fills us with a sense of mystery, corresponding to its unmeasured but waiting power.

There is another mighty agent in the world, this time a personal agent, moved by heart and will. God is here, in immediate contact and intercourse with men. God is here, the Holy Spirit. There is none like him. Already has he wrought wonders of spiritual transformation. He has made a people for his own possession, imperfect yet truly his own. He has wrought upon innumerable men, suggesting what is holy, effecting repentance, awakening faith, transforming character. He has had part in all worthy works that men have performed, and not without him has any good thing been done. We may find the mystery of the present God in the mode of his operation; but we shall do better to feel the mystery of the present God as a mystery of pervading power and boundless possibility. What will he do next? How next will his kingdom come and his will be done? The world is athrill with

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the spiritual energy of God, and we are athrill with interest in what will come of it. We look about us and try to forecast the divine working. He who can make one new creature can make a million; he who can change men can change society. What is coming next? Where will he bring his holiness and love to bear upon our evil? What is the next great battle? Some battle worthy of God is certain to come on; what will it be? In what form will the infinite holiness and love be manifested, in setting right the relations between man and man and class and class, and bringing in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? When will the Mighty One be victorious? Here lies the inspiring mystery of the present God—a glorious mystery of divine possibilities (say rather of divine certainties yet unseen), in which we do well to walk with open eyes and open hearts. As we climb our hill thrilling with the sense of the mystery of God in his creation, so we should walk all the ways of life aglow with the sense of the mystery of God present in the Spirit of his grace.

I need not say that it is in this same world of mystery that we are called to study. In everything that we touch, in the realm of theology and religion, there is present the whole greatness of God. There are matters of fact to come before us, indeed, on which we can reach clear certainty. Questions of historical evidence, for example, are to be settled in the light of common day. But when we come to the substance of religion itself, here is nothing small, nothing limited, nothing completely comprehended. Nowhere has human understanding found the end. Everywhere wide vistas of possible knowledge open out before us. On every subject what we know is but a glimpse of what we may know. Flashes of the glory of God break out upon us from places where we fancied there was only darkness, or dimness at the best. Progress in the knowledge of God is endless. In such a world of



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divine mystery, study is no light and easy thing. The very facts that make it glorious make it absorbing and exacting. In studying religion, we are always studying God himself, in some form or part of his relation to men, and our entire work reaches out into the divine infinitude. Can we work slightly here, or judge rashly, or be childishly overconfident? Shall we expect always to understand what we find in this realm of thought? We believe in the rationality of God, and are sure that we are studying what is true and reasonable; but we are constantly confronted by the deepest mysteries of being, and such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is high, we cannot attain unto it. We encounter all the mystery that belongs to God's own depth and greatness, height and majesty. Often in the midst of our studies shall we be constrained to pause, and bow in reverence, and say, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For from him, and by him, and for him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

I do not wish to leave the subject without a few words upon what mystery in religion does for us. It is an element that we are sometimes inclined to resent. We almost think ourselves deprived of our rights if we cannot make clear statements that cover the whole field. Vagueness we suspect to be weakness, whatever the cause of it. A state in which there shall be no mystery often seems the state to be desired. We shall do well therefore to put mystery in its right place, and see what we owe to it.

I think it is plain from what has been said that mystery is not the same as uncertainty. If this is not plain, I cannot make it so. The things most certain to us are to us the most mysterious. And I think it must also be plain that mystery does not always imply real obscurity. Many a subject is profoundly mysterious to us that is not

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obscure, in any such manner as to work real perplexity in our minds. Mystery underlies and overhangs the whole, but is not where it gives us difficulty. It is wholesome to note these facts, which may somewhat clear our vision in a world of mystery, and prepare us to estimate our debt to mystery aright.

Shall I dare to say that mystery gives us religion? It is almost true. Certainly we may say, No mystery, no religion. If we did not live in a world of spiritual reality so profound as to be mysterious, no thought of such a thing as religion would ever arise. Religion is the outreach of the soul into the unseen. If there were no unseen realm in which the soul felt interest and knew that it had vast necessities, the whole realm that is now occupied by religion would be a blank. So we do well to be glad of this all-surrounding atmosphere of mystery, in which religion lives and moves and has its being. Let us not complain of it, as if we should be better off without it. It is the sphere in which our noblest blessings come to meet us. No mystery, no religion, whether in the earthly life or in the ever expanding heavenly.

For example, it is in the realm of mystery that we pray. Life is too great for us, duty is too solemn and difficult, and destiny too overwhelming: we cannot go alone. Moreover, we have within us that mysterious impulse to speak out into the unseen, sure that there is someone there to hear. Greatest fact and mystery of all, there is the present God, surrounding us ever, and available for help to the soul that relies upon him. There is a Father, full of grace and truth, whom our eyes do not behold, and whose nearness and goodness we can learn by faith and experience alone. Here are all the suitable conditions for prayer: and prayer has risen, the wide world through, to meet them. But leave the mystery out, and what would prayer be? If it could exist at all, it could be nothing but plain talk, no greater than it appears, unsuggestive, unin-

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spiring, prosaic, barren. Unmeasured aspiration, desires too great for words, "groanings that cannot be uttered," longings that reach out into the undiscovered country, the awe and rapture of standing in the unseen presence of holiness and glory, the bliss of communing with invisible love—where would all these be if mystery were eliminated from our life? It is in that immeasurable, inestimable, undiscoverable, which nevertheless is but the extension of that which is already ours—it is in this that the experimental power of our religion resides. It is here that our spiritual being may rise above itself and commune with God.

Moreover, it is only in the realm of mystery that we can possibly find due sense of the greatness of truth, and of God himself. The true is the real: truth is that which is. To know truth is to know that which is. But as a matter of fact, that which is is infinitely beyond us, stretching out on every side, and the world that is is a world of mystery. Only in a world of mystery, therefore, can truth, or any truth, be discerned aright. We might be trained, I know, to suppose truth capable of perfect definition, with all lines distinct and final: and we might think ourselves doing it best justice when we craved comprehensive statements that could be carried, statements compact, neat, and sufficient for a lifetime. But truth is not such that it can thus be carried complete in handy form. Our clearest statements are often clear because they are inadequate: we can make them neat because they include so little. That vast element which we cannot include in full is essential to the true thought of truth: and only when we behold truth shading off into the brightness of mystery do we begin to see it as it is. And what shall I say of our conception of him concerning whom our studies in religion lead us both first and last to think? We might imagine that God could be adequately set forth in words, and bounded by sharp definitions: but

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we know better. Well do we know that he is far beyond us in our utmost reach of thought. If we try to think of him without recognizing the mystery of infinity, we utterly misconceive him, and think no true thought of him at all. We may think of him, with the king, as dwelling in the thick darkness, or with the apostle, as dwelling in light unapproachable, or with the prophet, as inhabiting eternity; in any case we must admit to our thought the element of mystery, or we cannot know him as he is. Omit this, and we worship a God narrowed to our own dimensions, and a God who never lived. Thus whatever true sense we have of his eternal greatness and glory we owe to our living in the world of mystery.

If religion is indebted to the fact of mystery, so is theology. The influence of mystery upon our thinking in theology is wondrously ennobling. Need I dwell upon it? When do we grow narrow, unspiritual, and unable to discern the things of God? When we think we know it all: when we fancy that our definitions fence in the field. The sense of mystery, as we have seen, is the sense of largeness in the truth we deal with. It humbles us. Here everything at last is rational and intelligible, but everything is infinite—and who is he that thinks himself ready to know it all? If once we thoroughly learn the lesson of our own littleness in the midst of the infinite, then indeed it begins to be possible for us to know aright. Mystery teaches us our littleness. Yet at the same time, how the mystery that attends religion quickens our minds, wakens our hearts, inspires our adoration, stirs our deepest longings, and irresistibly attracts our zeal! In such a world as that of religion, who can rest without reaching out to that which is still beyond? This attraction is inexhaustible, because God is infinite. It will remain with us, or we with it, forever. "While life and thought and being last," God will still be mysterious to created spirits, and the charm of pressing on to know the Lord will be upon us.

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Clearness of perception and statement is good, and we will strive for it, in its place, and we shall ever be gaining more of it as we go on: and yet the clearer our thought of him whom our souls love, the farther off into infinity will stretch our vision of that which we have yet to learn concerning him. Mystery, rightly used, is never the death of clearness; rather is it the life without which clearness itself is dead.

It is by due recognition of the real mystery of religion that we can avoid making our theology too mysterious. In this realm there are mysteries, and mysteries. The mystery that belongs to the nature of things, the depth of reality, and the greatness of God and man, abides forever. We would not escape it if we could, for it is the robe of the eternal, and the eternal glory shines through it. But we can easily make mysteries besides. We can perplex ourselves and one another by too sharp defining. We can fail to trust the rationality of God, and think we must bring all to the measure of our own present rationality. Thus we may labor too hard for completeness and consistency, and make a system so consistent that it agrees well with nothing but itself, the world of God and man being too large for it. We can bring one thing into opposition with another, and state matters infinite so definitely as to provoke doubt rather than invite faith. Such difficulties of oversystematizing, when we have created them, we shall very likely call mysteries, and class with the mysteries divine amid which God has placed us all: and then theology will seem to us to be hopelessly full of mysteries, some of them heartbreaking mysteries.

But if we live and move and have our being in the midst of the true mystery of God, we shall be delivered from much of the temptation to this harmful method. A sense of the real mystery divine is the surest safeguard against burdening ourselves with needless mysteries human. When we believe in the rationality of God, mys-



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teries that consist in contradiction will retire from our field. When we feel the infinity of truth, we shall not be overdogmatic, or so limit truth as to make it troublesome to faith. When we know our own littleness in the face of the vast unity of truth in God, we shall make our systems simple, flexible, free to growth, and the only mystery that we are likely to encourage in them is that mystery into which we all were born, and in which all souls must live forever.

Within these walls we hope to spend a year together in study of the things of God. Let us begin our work in the attitude of reverence. How great is God! how great is truth!—how much greater than we know, or can ever know! With unspeakable reverence let us stand together in so solemn a presence. Let us be humbly glad of our calling to be students of God, and take the place of little children learning at our Father's feet. Yet let us enter upon our year of work with eagerness and hope. Upon how vast and inspiring a field of study are we entering! The one thing that we know is, that it stretches infinitely beyond our present vision, and is full, both near and far, of the riches of God's grace and truth. Rich returns await our labor, in the revelation of God and the gift of his truth, to every soul that is in earnest. Eagerly therefore let us go forward to our labor, being sure that the God whom we are seeking to know will be known of us, and will do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

## THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR OUR SALVATION\*

That in Jesus Christ there was performed a work for the salvation of us men, all Christians have held, but just what that work was and what it meant, they have not all discerned alike. There is a long history of doctrine on the subject, in the course of which interpretation after interpretation has arisen, no one of which has sufficed for universal satisfaction. The ordinary Christian belief of today inherits from all of these without knowing it. The ordinary Christian belief may suppose itself to be the ancient and original, and to have sure promise of permanence; yet the interpretation of the work of Christ has changed so often as to assure us that it may change again, and to warn us of our duty to inquire what is the interpretation that we ought to hold at the present hour.

There is one very simple question about the work of Christ, not often distinctly stated or discussed, which nevertheless leads into the very heart of the subject, and is available for help not only to theologians but to all thoughtful Christians. This question relates to the action that was put forth in the work of Christ for our salvation, and to the direction in which it moved. There was action put forth in Christ's work: Which way did it move? What was its direction? Toward what was it aimed, and where did it take effect? In the course of

\* Given in June, 1900, before the Friends' Summer School of Theology, at Haverford College. Published in *Present Day Papers*, August, 1900. Editor, J. Wilhelm Rowntree, Bishopsgate, London.



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the history this question has been variously answered, and it will be profitable to recount the answers to it that the history of doctrine yields. Such inquiry will lead up to the present state of the question, and prepare us to answer the question at present for ourselves.

There was an ancient doctrine, long current, to the effect that the life of Christ was paid by God as a ransom to Satan, who as the lord of evil held captive the souls that were given to sin. Jesus said that he was to give his life a ransom for many; and to whom should a ransom be paid but to the one who holds the captives? So God, by giving his son to death, purchased from the devil the men whom he would save. For a thousand years there was no well-formulated doctrine of the work of Christ, but during that long period this came as near as anything to being the defined and accepted theory.

This earliest doctrine illustrates our question, while it provides one characteristic answer to it. According to this idea, the action in Christ's work proceeded from God. It was God's own action, and was directed toward sin, or toward Satan as the representative of sin. It was not directed or addressed to God at all, but was purely God's action, directed toward the evil from which he sought to deliver men.

In the eleventh century, Anselm introduced a new interpretation, in which this movement was reversed. It was a philosophical or theological theory, not biblical in character, founded on governmental relations between God and men. According to this doctrine, men owe to God perfect obedience, loyalty, and love, but they have not given it. Sin, in which all are involved, has thus robbed God of what is rightfully his due, and has at the same time grievously insulted his infinite majesty. From men there is therefore due to God in view of sin an infinite satisfaction. Every man owes to God a debt too great to be estimated, and the total obligation of mankind to God

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because of sin is simply infinite. If this satisfaction is ever to be paid to God, it must be paid by man, for from man it is due, and from no other quarter can the payment be accepted. But mankind is hopelessly incapable of paying it. Hence God, desiring to save men, himself becomes man by incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ, in order that the God-man may do, from within humanity, that necessary thing which is otherwise impossible. Christ the God-man dies. Since he is sinless he did not need to die, and since he is divine his death is of infinite value; and this infinite value in his death is accepted by God as balancing the human debt. By this means God is satisfied, and salvation is rendered possible.

Here was a profound revolution from the earlier thought. According to this, the action that was put forth in the work of Christ was addressed to God, and to God alone. It was solely because God required to be satisfied on account of human sin that a work of Christ was necessary, and the work of Christ did nothing except to satisfy the divine requirement. Anselm's theory did not touch the experimental human side of salvation, but only the divine side, and touched the divine side only so far as to show how God is free to save men, now that his infinite demand because of sin is satisfied. What Christ did took effect upon God, and upon God alone. Christ wrought a work upon God.

Five centuries after Anselm came the Reformation, and now for the first time a strictly biblical basis was sought for doctrine. Anselm's view of Christ's work corresponded to a legal relation between God and men, and the Anselmic satisfaction was a legal satisfaction. But now that the Bible, and the whole Bible, came in as the basis of doctrine, a new meaning arose for the conception of law. The Mosaic law was now the standard; and the Mosaic law, taken to be in the full sense God's own law, required on account of sin, not satisfaction after the man-

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ner of debt and civil law, but punishment after the manner of this world's criminal law. The law of God demands punishment. As the Reformers read it, the law of God denounced the curse of God, extending to eternal perdition, upon every sinful being as the penalty of sin; and God's law, or justice, inexorably required that all sin be punished.

In accordance with this change in the nature of God's demand, it was natural that the doctrine of the work of Christ should undergo a change. The analogies of the civil law requiring payment gave place to the analogies of criminal law requiring punishment. It was held by the Reformers and their successors that what Christ did was to endure the penalty of human sin. He was punished for us. Of course such a position implied the acceptance of a doctrine of substitution, which the Anselmic theory had not required. But there was no hesitation at this. It was held that Christ really took the sinner's place in the sight of God, was regarded by God as sinful, and endured what the sinner, and indeed what the sinful world ought to have borne. It was held that the immeasurable value of his person as divine imparted to his sufferings a worth that overbalanced their brevity, and made them equal to the punishment of all sin. He endured the wrath of God, and, it was sometimes said, the torments of the damned, and thus exhausted the claim of God for punishment because of sin.

This change in the doctrine, however, implied no change with reference to the point of the present inquiry. Christ's work was still a work of satisfaction to God, and to God it was still directed. Christ was offering to God the endurance of punishment, just as in the Anselmic theory he was offering to God the payment of the human debt. God required this: God needed this if he was to save. But for this necessity there would have been no call for a work of Christ. Thus the action in his work

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still moved toward God, and terminated and took effect upon him.

Another doctrine soon came in, which has been known as the governmental theory of the work of Christ, a theory that is most interesting for our present study. Here it was held that God is more free than he has been thought to be; he is not obliged to demand full satisfaction for the human debt or full punishment for human sin, but may accept whatever he judges best to accept as the ground of merciful dealing with sinful men. Being thus free, he considers the welfare of his creatures, and is satisfied if his merciful dealing with sinners is not fairly liable to be understood as trifling with evil. He intends to forgive sin, but feels that his government must be vindicated as righteous while he shows grace to the sinful. Hence Christ suffers. But he does not suffer the penalty of sin; this is expressly denied, and it is denied that suffering the penalty of sin is necessary. Christ endures such suffering that those who behold cannot misunderstand God's attitude and suppose him to be indifferent to evil while he deals graciously with sinners. Christ's suffering vindicates God's government as well as punishment would vindicate it, and as well as it needs to be vindicated.

In what direction, according to this theory, does the action move? Though the fact has often been unnoticed, this theory marks a complete revolution in the doctrine of the work of Christ. Here, at the heart of the matter, the action proceeds toward men. The action is God's own, intended for vindication of his government. The end in view is not the satisfaction of God at all, but the convincing of men that God is righteous while he is gracious. All that Christ does he does, according to this theory, not because some necessity in God's nature demands it, but because human interests require it. The governmental theory of Christ's work is strictly and

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thoroughly a moral influence theory. Multitudes of Christians, and a host of theologians, have held it supposing it to be a satisfaction theory, but it is not. The governmental theory is not a modification of the Anselmic doctrine or of the substitutionary view; it squarely denies the central principle of both, and affirms that the action in Christ's work was directed not toward God but toward men.

All moral influence theories are, of course, to the same effect. Ever since the Middle Ages the belief has now and again arisen that in the work of Christ, God himself was the real actor, directing his action toward the men whom he desired to bless and save, and that the whole endeavor was intended to bring men home to God. That God was thus seeking men in Christ, and exerting a winning influence upon them, has indeed been held by all. But some have held that the seeking to save was the sole motive in the coming-forth of the Good Shepherd, and that in Christ, God was directing his action wholly toward men for their eternal good.

What is the fair conclusion from this brief review of the history? Nothing can be plainer than that on this subject Christian thought has been feeling its way. Directly opposite positions have been held concerning the direction of the endeavor that was put forth in Christ, and have sometimes been held without the contradiction being noticed. The doctrine has not yet worked itself clear. It still has progress to make. More work needs to be done upon it. It seems quite possible that the history may be leading on to some clearer and more satisfactory form than the doctrine has ever yet borne.

There is one element in the doctrine, however, in which all Christians agree; and it is an element that will be helpful toward a better understanding. Toward whatever end the action in Christ's work may have moved, there is no doubt as to where it began. Let the whither



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be what it may, the whence is clear. It came from God. The first thing certain about the work of Christ for our salvation is that God is the author of it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have eternal life." "God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The work of Christ is a work of God's own love. All the theories represent it so. In the ancient doctrine, it was God who bought men from Satan by the ransom that was paid in the death of Christ. In the Anselmic theory, it was God who provided the God-man through incarnation, in order that his own demand for satisfaction might be met. In the substitutionary theory of the Reformers, it was God who arranged that Christ should bear the penalty of sin in the stead of sinners, that his own law might be satisfied. In the governmental theory, it was God who provided that his own government should be vindicated by the sufferings of Christ. In the moral influence theory, of course, it was God who sought through Christ to bring sinners to repentance and faith. Thus there is one point of universal agreement. Salvation is from God. In whatever direction the work of Christ may have moved, and wherever it may have taken effect, the action has always been held to have proceeded originally from God, and to be in its motive God's own action. Indeed, this is a primary Christian fact, so clear and certain that no theory could ignore it.

In some of the theories this primary Christian element is perfectly at home and suggests no difficulty. In the ancient theory God acts toward Satan. In the moral influence theory God acts toward men, whom he desires to save. In the governmental theory God acts toward men in general, or toward the universe, to give evidence of his righteousness. This is all intelligible. But in the Anselmic theory, and in the substitutionary theory, God



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acts upon himself: and this is not so clear. The action is originated and carried through by God, and at the same time it terminates and has effect on God, being required by necessities that exist in him. This is the same as to say that God acts upon himself. This indeed has been constantly affirmed. That God in Christ has paid the debt that was due to himself, and that God has in Christ borne the punishment that his own requirements laid upon sinful men,—these statements have been willingly accepted. God removing his own difficulties, God meeting his own demands, God offering satisfaction to his own righteousness, God's love satisfying God's justice,—these have been common designations of the meaning of the work of Christ. According to the Anselmic theory and all penal substitutionary theories the action in Christ's work is God's action, taking effect on God. There is no such thing as holding either of these views without holding as the very center of the doctrine that in the work of Christ God acted and at the same time was acted upon, or, in other words, that God acted upon himself.

Here is at least the suggestion of a difficulty. That God acted, we can understand, or that God was acted upon: but can both be true of the same action? The difficulty that any theory of God acting upon himself has to encounter is the difficulty of unreality. We have learned of Christ, and it has become necessary, not only that we should be able to put our doctrine of God into language, but that our language should represent thought that we can conceive as real. Christ has taught us that God is the most true, genuine, sincere, and straightforward of beings. The better we learn of Christ, the more unable are we to predicate of God anything self-contradictory or artificial or unreal. If we try to think of God as acting upon himself in order to influence himself we find ourselves in the presence of the unreal, and lose the divine directness and simplicity. Unreality dwells in the

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very idea of God acting upon himself in order to satisfy his own demands and enable himself to do what his nature requires. If God is a perfect being his attributes never conflict with one another or need to be harmonized. The nature of a perfect being will not require and forbid the same action. If his justice and love need to be harmonized he is less than perfect. In a perfect being action intended to harmonize these two would be unreal. And if God really so loves the world as to give his son to save it, and is actually ready to begin the work by the gift of Christ, what reality can he be seeing in obstacles that we think need to be removed? If the sincere and straightforward God is ready to commend his own love toward us by the death of Christ for us while we are yet sinners, what can he really need to have done or offered to him before he can save us? If, as Paul and John affirm, God himself sets forth a propitiation for our sins, how can he really need to be propitiated? and what reality can there be in propitiation, in the well-known sense of that ancient word? The clearer our thought of a perfect God, the less can we think of him as needing first of all to put forth action upon himself, in order that his highest attributes may have free course to do their will. Nor do we find more real the various accompanying details, out of which the theories of God acting upon himself are built up. The idea that the relation between God and man is legal: the idea that the perfect God thinks first of his own majesty and must have satisfaction; the idea that suffering can be an equivalent for sin; the idea that God has in mind an equivalent of any kind for sin, or for the sum of human sins, or that such an equivalent can exist; the idea that sin against an infinite person is therefore an infinite sin; the idea that punishment can satisfy God for moral transgression; the idea that brief sufferings of a great person can equal long sufferings of inferior persons; the idea that punishment can be transferred from the

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guilty to the innocent, and merit from the good to the bad; the idea that there can be with God any such thing as substitution of person for person in the field of righteousness;—all these, which are companions to the idea of God influencing himself, are affected by the central fault of unreality. It may be unnoticed long, but it will be seen at length. The fact seems to be that if we wish to hold a doctrine that is real, we must choose between the two directions for the action in the work of Christ; we cannot combine them. There may be action that takes effect on God to influence him, but we may be sure that it originates somewhere else than in God himself; and there may be action that originates in God, but we may be sure that it takes effect upon some other. God does not influence himself.

If we choose, or judge, between these two directions there can be no doubt as to the result. In the work of Christ, was God the actor, or was God acted upon? for we are at war with reality if we attempt to affirm both. We cannot hesitate about our answer. God was the actor. This indeed is the first thing that we know. This is what makes the gospel divine. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. God spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, and will with him also freely give us all things, thus completing the work that was his own throughout. In spirit and motive, in will and exertion, the work of Christ is God's own work, in which God himself is active. If this element were taken away, the work of Christ for us would vanish. This alone gives it significance and power. The satisfaction theories have held firmly that all was from God, and therein they have been right; but they have tried to hold also that this work which God was doing took effect upon God himself to influence him, and herein they have introduced unreality and confusion. God was the actor in the work of Christ,

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but his action moved outward from himself, not around and inward toward himself again.

Upon whom then did God act? Out from him the action came, but whither was it directed? Not toward Satan, as men once supposed, and not toward the world that might misunderstand his grace, but, simply and straightforwardly, toward us men whom he desired to save. God acted toward men, the sinful, to accomplish for them what was in his heart. There was no other straightforward direction for the movement to take, and this direction it did take. In Christ God moved upon the world to save it.

And what was the action? The action was self-expression on the part of God. Christ appeared in time, on the plane of human life, within human limitations and within the reach of human acquaintance, to show what God eternally is. In Christ God made revelation of his eternal Saviourhood. What Christ did represented what goes on eternally in God. In Christ God gave sinful men to know that in having to do with him they had to do with a God like Christ, who cherishes an infinite hatred of their sin, and is doing all that needs to be done, except what they themselves must do, to deliver them from it.

When we hear about the divinity of Christ we spring at once to the adoring affirmation that Christ is like God; whereas, if we are to get any revelation out of it, we must adoringly learn that God is like Christ. Have we not been told so? "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In Christ God makes self-revelation, and enables us to know that what we find true of Christ in life and death is true of him also. To make this plain, and to win for this truth its appropriate power with men, God sent his son into the world, and Jesus lived and died and rose again.

Is this a doctrine that we need no Saviour? No; it is the doctrine that we do need a Saviour, and should

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perish if we had not one; but it is the doctrine also that we have a Saviour now and ever, and that our Saviour is God. God is out of sight, and human ignorance of him is deepened by sin, so that men are more than ignorant, they are wrong, profoundly misjudging him whom it is life for them to know. The fact is, though concealed by God's invisibility and worse than unknown through sin, that God is the redemptive Being. He is the lover of holiness, the hater of sin and the Father of souls, whose nature it is to do all that needs to be done, apart from their own action, for the spiritual redemption and salvation of his creatures. It is his nature to love, to bear, to wait, to work, to chasten, to restore, to be gracious and severe, to be righteous, patient, firm, long-suffering, in the long endeavor to save. He is unseen, and men are misjudging him, but this is what he really is. God is Saviour. Of course then such a God cannot be content without making himself known as Saviour; and in Christ he gives his eternal Saviourhood temporal expression. He gives Christ to be the Saviour of the world; but if we imagined that Christ was a Saviour apart from God, or as anything else than the expression of God's Saviourhood, how quickly would Christ rebuke us for the thought! Christ is the messenger and revelation of God's own Saviourhood. What is revealed in Christ is that God is a holy God and a Saviour; most especially that he is for us a Saviour, and is all the Saviour that we need. All that we behold in Christ,—all the holiness, the love, the sin-bearing, the seeking of the lost, the untiring endeavor, the severity, the patience, the unselfish devotion to our good,—is shown us as an expression of what exists in God himself. If there is anything in Christ that condemns our sin and breaks our hearts and wins our souls to penitence, it all exists in God, and from him the appeal all comes. If we see Christ doing all for our salvation, that means that God is doing all for our salva-



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tion. God himself is our sin-bearer and Saviour, and Christ is his exhibition of himself. And if we ask what is the ground of God's merciful dealing with sinful men, the sending of his son to the world is the undying proof and testimony that God has in himself the ground of his merciful dealing with sinful men, and needs no other ground. The cross of Christ gives proclamation of the infinite mercy of God, and of the sufficiency of the divine Saviourhood.

This is an action of God against which no charge of unreality can hold. Christ is the real expression of the real God, for the realization of that gracious purpose which his nature inspires. This action is not indirect, circuitous, artificial, but is directly aimed at its real object. It is vital, expressing God himself to man himself. It involves no fictions or falsities. Unrealities will not naturally gather round it. It is worthy of God, and worthy of man. When the doctrine of a holy Saviour-God revealed in Christ is held as a vital reality by a church of holy saviour-men, the gospel of Christ in this form will surely prove itself the power of God unto salvation.

A little catechism may close this article.

*What is the ground of our salvation?*

The ground of our salvation is God, who is the infinite redemptive goodness,—a Being perfectly good in himself, whose nature it is to be drawing us to goodness also.

*Why is our sin so terrible a thing?*

Our sin is so terrible a thing because it is sin against this infinite redemptive goodness, with which we ought to be at one, and because it blinds us to him, and keeps us away from him, and makes us opposers instead of helpers to his redemptive work.

*What needs to be done in order that we may be saved?*

Since God is God, nothing needs to be done to him in order that we may be saved; but we must answer his



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redemptive goodness with our penitence and faith and love, and let him have his way with us in bringing us out of sin to himself.

*What has Christ done for us?*

Christ has shown us the Father. He has revealed the infinite redeeming love of the holy God, and has thus opened the way for us to believe in God our Saviour and be saved by his grace.

*Of what use is Christ to us at present?*

Christ is still the expression of God to us, and he is our way to God. From him we learn what God is like, and by living in fellowship with him, who is our tender human brother, we live in fellowship with God.

*What is the Holy Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit is God as he dwells in us to accomplish in us that work of redemptive goodness for which he prepared the way in the life and death of Christ.

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.*

## HUXLEY AND PHILLIPS BROOKS\*

The last months of the nineteenth century witnessed the publication of two great biographies: "The Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley," by Leonard Huxley, his son, and "The Life of Phillips Brooks," by Professor Allen. No two biographies could more fitly have seen the light just as the old century was expiring. They are great in themselves, rich in material, sympathetic and strong in execution, worthy of their subjects; and they are great in significance, as representative of great movements and tendencies in the century that is past. Each of the two men was a leader of vast effectiveness, picturesque as well as strong, who left a powerful impress upon his time, and each stands for a view of life that is today of the first importance. Taken together, the two biographies bring out in the acutest form the great religious contrast and question of the present age. I can propose nothing more helpful than a study of these men as their biographies present them, and of some of the sharp issues that are raised by the twofold story. It is true that I am not competent to discuss the two men in view of all that they have done. Only a skilled scientist could do justice to Huxley, and only a great master in religion to Brooks. If I limit myself to the biographies and what they suggest, even thus the field is far too large for the time at my disposal. But let me do what I can toward setting before you the men and their meaning.

\* An address delivered before the Oberlin Theological Seminary, and before the Alumni of Colgate University, in 1901. Published in *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1901, and by H. R. Allenson, London, 1903.

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Very impressive are the two men as a pair of prominent figures in their century. Huxley was born in 1825, Brooks in 1835. Huxley's first large work was done in the fifties, Brooks's in the sixties. Brooks died in 1893, Huxley in 1895. Both were intense and furious workers, laboring to the uttermost, and the two broke in health at about the same age; Brooks dying at once, however, while Huxley lingered for years in comparative feebleness. Their activity covered the period of greatest transformation in the nineteenth century. On two continents of the world, in two continents of thought, the two men labored simultaneously, in the thick of the time when new things were pressing in to be known and estimated and life was finding new significance. They met more than once—in London—once as guests of James Russell Lowell. Huxley talked, but Brooks was silent. The meeting was pleasant, but no special contact was established between the two. Perhaps Brooks could have understood Huxley better than Huxley could have understood Brooks, but the two men stood apart, each a prominent figure in his own world of thought and life. Each looked into the other's world, as he must, and dealt with questions thence arising, in what manner we shall see; but neither ever really lived in the world of the other.

Huxley was born for science. His father was a teacher, though not a remarkably intelligent man, or specially helpful to the son. His mother was a keen, clear-sighted woman, quick and strong in her intellectual processes. As for early education, he came under no systematic educational influence whatever, until he entered upon the study of medicine. This he did at the age of seventeen, and now he met his first good teacher. He was precocious: he had already been keenly interested in metaphysical questions, had taught himself something of two or three languages, and had begun to think of science. From sheer want of company he did his own thinking; but probably he would

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have done that in any case, for his mind was his own from the first, and he was as bold as he was insatiable. Before he had quite reached his medical degree, at the age of twenty-one, he found the way into the work for which he was born. Like Darwin, he began his real career on a British government vessel, fitted out for a long cruise in the interests of science. The subjects to be explored were Geography, Geology, and Natural History; and in the waters of the antipodes, about Australia and New Guinea, he spent four years of close work, amid the infinite abundance of tropical life, engaged in careful observation and record-making. In this labor he struck the keynote of his life—observation strict and searching, and honest interpretation following it. Long afterward some amateur critic in natural science ventured into newspaper discussion with Huxley, and, after doing what he could, but far less than he thought he was doing, sarcastically inquired what he should do in order to understand the subject better. "Get a cockroach and dissect it," was Huxley's unsympathetic answer. Work, investigation, examination of facts, careful, patient, thorough, candid, without pre-suppositions, intended to discover the very thing that is and set it in its true place among other things that are: this was the aim of the man from youth to age, and to this his life was wholly and unswervingly devoted.

In Australia he lost his heart, and found his life; and after his return to England the burning question for some time was whether science would support a family. Science was very slow in welcoming this new devotee, but at length he found his work. It was no one thing at first, and it was never any one thing, in exclusive fashion, but it was physical science always, physical science and what it suggested. Lecturing, writing, care and reorganization of a great museum, administering scientific societies, serving on public scientific commissions, popular scientific education, introduction of sound methods in place of un-

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sound, lending a hand to every progressive movement, battling what he judged to be false and standing up for truth and righteousness as he saw it—such activities as these, with constant laboratory work, investigation, discovery, classification, verification, proof, and defense of conclusions, occupied his head and heart and hands through years of uttermost industry, and conveyed his contribution to his age. At thirty years old he questioned himself thus: "To smite all humbugs, however big; to give a nobler tone to science; to set an example of abstinence from petty personal controversies, and of toleration for everything but lying; to be indifferent as to whether the work is recognized as mine or not, so long as it is done—are these my aims?" One who follows through the work of his life will feel that Huxley was not unfaithful to this vision of high character and worthy work.

He had a genius for unity, and was always putting this and that together. What first made him known among scientists was the discovery of certain homologies in the living world, where only difference had been discerned before. This was an unforeseen result of his years of labor in the comparatively unknown life of southern seas. He was a born classifier, and a habitual discoverer for lost things of their place in nature. Hence he was ready for Darwin's announcement of proof for the evolutionary method in the world; and though he never perfectly agreed with Darwin, he was from the very beginning a bold and formidable advocate of that unity in the universe which is covered by the name evolution. Darwin could not fight, but Huxley could, and did: he fought the battles of the doctrine everywhere, and some of the battle-scenes were highly dramatic. The second great book on the subject, next after Darwin's "Origin of Species," was Huxley's "Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature." He bore the reproach of the new doctrine, and assisted in its victory.

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The personal characteristics of the man are not merely essential to his biography, they constitute a vital part of his scientific attitude. No man was ever more steadily himself. Huxley was the same, from his first days in science to his last. He appears in the biography as a man of sturdy will, of cheerful temperament, of sparkling wit and various humor, of warm affections, of broad interests. Mr. John Fiske has told us, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, how extraordinarily lovable he was, especially in the delightful atmosphere of his home. As to his intellectual attitude, it was simply and steadily that of an honest man. The greatest virtue in his esteem was truthfulness, and all shams were objects of his hatred and indignation. An honest opponent he never failed to respect, but a shifty one called down his wrath. There were great men whom he never forgave the sin of shiftiness in argument, of which he believed them guilty. Most honestly did he apply his honesty to himself. No work for him but careful work: no superficial examinations, no hasty inferences, no method but the strictest method. No presuppositions as to what an examination is to reveal. A scientist, he said, has no *a priori* assumptions, and would as willingly come to one conclusion as to another, the facts being decisive. "Science," he said, "seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly whatever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this." Accordingly with him it was a part of personal honor that the unexamined should be regarded as the unknown, and the unproven should be the unaccepted. His kind of proof, also, was the demonstrative and exact; where he could not obtain this he had no con-



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clusions,—all waited for light. A generalization on too narrow a basis of facts was a sin when it was made in the face of light, and a thing to be avoided as sin in all cases. Probably a more honest scientist never faced a laboratory table. His moral sense entered too into his theory of life in general. He was a firm believer in morals as the highest human interest. He respected sincerity, and never tried to influence young students away from their sincere religious beliefs. He advocated the reading of the Bible in the schools of London when he was a member of the school board, on the ground that the Bible was the great moral educator of the people who were concerned, and morality, he said, is the matter first to be considered.

The story of Huxley's agnosticism is simply the story of his honesty. To his own great loss, "not proven" was his verdict concerning God and the soul, eternity and religion. To him, of course, not proven meant not available. He tells the origin of the word "agnostic," of which he was the inventor. In the Metaphysical Society, of London, he encountered men of all sorts of belief, who seemed to him to have this one thing in common, that they thought the problem of existence had been solved. It is true that they were by no means agreed as to what the right solution was, but each man thought that there was one: each had his gnosis, his theory, his interpretation of the universal mystery. Huxley had none, and could not discover that there was one to be had; and so, over against these gnostics, or knowers, he called himself an agnostic, or one who does not know the universal meaning or expect that it will be known. The name was not a confession of universal ignorance, or a declaration that nothing can be known, as some have professed to understand it, for no one ever believed more thoroughly than Huxley in the attainableness of sound knowledge. It denoted simply his consistent refusal to affirm the undemonstrated, applied in the realm of God and religion. With

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him it was a word of honesty, which described him as he was, and as with his views of evidence he had to be. It makes a profoundly pathetic story, this story of life within the limits that were prescribed by his agnosticism—limits that he could not pass, and yet across which his normal soul would sometimes look, not without longing. Of this I shall speak again. It is touching to remember, though we decline to read into it meanings larger than he meant, that upon his tombstone there were inscribed, by his own direction, three lines from a poem written by his wife,

Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep;  
For still He giveth His beloved sleep,  
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best,

and that the *He* is written with a capital.

As Huxley was born for science, so one may say that Phillips Brooks was born for religion. His ancestry led that way. The Brookses were practical people of the common life, strong in sound morals and by no means unreligious. The Phillipses were more highly educated people, given to the professions, enterprising in church and state, serious, vigorous, religious. Phillips Brooks's mother was one of the most religious of the religious—intense, conscientious, self-sacrificing, rapturous. All her maternity, which was of the most eager and self-lavishing kind, and all her religiousness, blended into a single passion toward her children. Few men have ever known such mother-love as embraced this son, so long as his mother lived. A high-minded, sensible father and a high-souled, fervent mother gave him birth.

Unlike Huxley, Phillips Brooks received the best education that his environment afforded. He was not precocious. He passed through Harvard without doing wonders. He would have chosen to be a teacher, but an ill-starred experience turned him aside from that. It was by unforeseen ways that he was led into that work apart

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from which he would never have been himself. Under an impulse that was an unconscious ripening of all the past, he found himself in a small theological seminary, where there was one inspiring teacher, and scarcely any other inspiring thing. In the three years that he spent there his first conscious and well-directed work was done. The seminary was so little absorbing that he took his own way, and it was the way of reading. His reading was enormous in amount and very wide in range. He sought to lay hold upon the best that the human mind has done, and to make it his own.

Here his ideal was unlike Huxley's. Huxley once wrote: "The student to whose wants the mediæval university was adjusted looked to the past and sought book-learning, while the modern looks to the future and seeks the knowledge of things. . . . The modern knows that the only source of real knowledge lies in the application of scientific methods to the ascertainment of the facts of existence; that the unascertained is infinitely greater than the ascertained, and that the chief business is not so much to make scholars as to train pioneers." So Huxley thought that what man has done may well be neglected in favor of what man may do. For past achievements he cared little, save as they were either warnings or guides for present use. Brooks, however, turned with all the strength of his being to the study of man and what man has done. His field was the human. Human interest was the very stuff of which his life was made, and it was by human interest that his studies were dominated. It was on topics of conspicuous human interest that he read so insatiably, and in his reading he was seeking to appropriate the worthiest product of human thought. He read, he considered, he weighed, he sought for insight, he endeavored to think justly the great thoughts of humanity, and to learn to do justice to humanity in his thoughts.

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This was the key to the life of Phillips Brooks,—he was a student of man, and a servant of man. Whatever any one else might choose as a field of thought and effort, he was the man of humanity. To know and understand the human, to know existence in the light of human relations, to serve mankind by ministering to it the good that it needs in the higher ranges of its life,—these were his aims and choices, this was his consecration. His early reading lay in the field of life, and his reflections, of which he made constant record from first to last, were reflections upon life and the soul. He was not indifferent to the world of science, but in the world of philosophy he was somewhat more at home, and in life itself most of all. This preparatory work was a true preliminary to his career in the Christian ministry, where for a third of a century he served mankind as a minister of Jesus Christ.

The work of Brooks was done in two cities, Philadelphia and Boston. Only in cities could he have worked, for he was a city man, to whom the city was indispensable. He could not long be content in the country: he must be in the rush of men. Nature was circumference, man was center. In his travels, architecture was more to him than mountains: human use appealed to him as inanimate grandeur could not. He lived in a crowd, he held himself at the service of men, he was incomparably accessible to such as he could help, he gave himself without reserve, he poured out vitality without stint wherever he felt that men had need of him. In his two homes his human interest took two forms. In Philadelphia he took part in every human interest that came appealing. He was an active reformer. Into the defense of the nation in the Civil War he threw the whole force of his being. He gave his witness against slavery, and gloried when it was no more. He braved unpopularity to secure rights for negroes in street cars. He helped all sorts of local reforms. But in Boston he withdrew as rapidly as he could from outside reforma-

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tory activities, and devoted himself wholly to religious interests. Still it was all for man, but now it was for man in the spirit, man in the life of the soul, man in religion. To quicken and deepen the life of men with God, and to suffuse all human existence with the glow of the glory of God in Christ, this was now his sole aim, held with increasing singleness as the years went by. Thus he moved toward a climax. Up to the highest life of man his zeal and consecration moved, until in his ripest years he was pouring himself out in splendid sacrifice for the helping of the human in its fellowship with the divine. By the same action he was the servant of man and of God.

This was no abnormal movement of human interest; rather is all human interest that stops short of this incomplete. This is the right human interest, the interest that discerns the soul of man, and seeks to find a place for the soul in the order of existence. Man is a spirit, and the demands of his spiritual life are not only the supreme demands of his existence, but the most immediate and urgent also. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul? if he win everything below, but lose his way in the higher realms of the spirit, and find no success or welfare for his own highest part? To care aright for man is to care for him in this region. When I said that Brooks's field was the human, I meant that it was the true human, the human in its highest life and fellowship. It was the field of man with God, and God with man. For the two fields of God and man, if such they seem, are one. Human interest is divine interest too. The problems of God and the soul arise together, and are solved together, if either be solved at all. The very reality of the soul and the reality of God are discerned together if they are discerned in power. All reconciling and restful thought must deal with both, and all deep satisfaction for man must be found in the knowledge both of the soul and of its God.



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Huxley was not indifferent to that aspect or department of life in which men of religion have believed that they had found God. No man can be permanently indifferent to it if he really thinks, or if he feelingly encounters the great experiences of life. Least of all could this aspect of existence pass unnoticed by such a man as Huxley—a man so far-searching in intellectual interest, so honest in thought and warm in affection, and so in love with knowledge. He encountered the great experiences: he well knew struggle and weakness, love and loss, limitation and desire. Through family ties he was bound more closely than Brooks to the common human lot. Grief forced upon him the questions of the soul, and experience kept the significance of life before him.

He cared sincerely for these things, and yet in the region where rise the questions of God and the soul Huxley had neither enthusiastic beliefs nor even accepted certainties. He had his firm and enthusiastic moral convictions, but in what is known as the field of religion he was blank. This is no accusation from without, it is what he always said. It was just here that he was agnostic. The sudden death at four years old of his first child brought him a letter of sympathy and religious suggestion from Charles Kingsley; and in reply to this he gave utterance to his innermost heart as he had told it to no one but his wife. This letter of Huxley, with one or two later ones addressed to the same friend, has been much quoted since the biography appeared. These are letters of a genuine agnostic, as the word was by himself defined—of one who does not imagine that any key to the meaning of existence is in his hand or within his reach. Whether there is in the universe a substratum of being, distinct from phenomena, corresponding to what men mean when they speak of God, he regards as a question concerning which absolutely no convincing evidence exists. He is not a willful rejecter of God, but an unconvinced inquirer



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about him. "I have never had the least sympathy," he says, "with the *a priori* reasons against orthodoxy, and I have by nature and disposition the greatest possible antipathy to all the atheistic and infidel school. Nevertheless I know that I am, in spite of myself, exactly what the Christian world call, and so far as I can see are justified in calling, atheist and infidel." The order of the world is rational, and observation and experience have assured him that it is characterized by strict and certain justice: sin gravitates to sorrow, and righteousness to welfare. Yet the rationality and righteousness which he so profoundly feels to be present in the world he does not feel himself justified in attributing to a personal rational and righteous One. That there is personal quality at all in the administration of the world, he considers absolutely undemonstrable. That there is a Father invisible, loving men and helping them in spirit, of course he does not see. That the administration of the world, if such it can be called, knows anything of love, or is touched with tenderness, or takes any notice of human beings in the stress of their troubles or the perils of their career, he sees no evidence and can obtain no conviction. As to the immortality of man, there are no means of disproving it, but neither is there any reason for believing it. That we desire immortality is to him less than no proof that we have it; it should rather be a warning against believing in immortality because we wish it to be true, a course which a scientist's judgment and conscience will not allow to him. Of ethical appeal on the ground of immortality with its rewards and punishment, he feels no need, having ethical forces enough in the present life to govern him in good living. Of the existence of a soul in man, as something different from the bodily life and capable of persisting after death, he knows nothing: his own personality in such conditions he is unable to conceive. Thus he is wholly, honestly, and consistently agnostic as to those

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matters on which men of religion, like his correspondent Kingsley, make strong affirmations. He truly does not know, and he will maintain his integrity against all influences, and not lie by saying that he knows. Grief over his dead child shall not break his purpose to affirm only what he is sure of. He would believe in immortality if he had evidence of it, but without evidence what is a man to do? Nevertheless he is no materialist. "My fundamental axiom of speculative philosophy is that materialism and spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity—the absurdity of imagining that we know anything about either spirit or matter." And in all this he says that he is not alone. "Understand that all the younger men of science whom I know are essentially of my way of thinking. I know not a scoffer or an irreligious or an immoral man among them, but they all regard orthodoxy as you do Brahmanism."

Thus a great realm of human experience was to Huxley absolutely a blank. He did not despise it, or argue against it, or condemn it as worthless: he simply could not find it. In his judgment there was no standing-ground for such experience. It was a nonexistent world, and a world with no prospect of attaining to legitimate existence.

Here breaks upon us the full contrast between the two men whom we are placing in comparison. In the realm that to Huxley was nonexistent for want of evidence, Brooks lived and moved and had his being. Turn to that world for a moment, and hear the voice of one who finds it most real, and dwells at home in its spiritual atmosphere. Quotation is the quickest way to show what Phillips Brooks found there: "‘I knew all about God before you told me,’ said little blind, deaf, dumb Helen Keller to me one day, ‘only I did not know his name.’ It was a perfect expression of the innateness of the divine idea in the human mind, of the belonging of the human soul to

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God." Of religion he says: "It comes directly from the soul of God laid immediately upon and pressing itself into the soul of every one of his children. It is the gift of the total nature of God to the total nature of man. Therefore it can utter itself only through the total human life, which is the personal life." In a more personal strain, speaking of his own experience, he says again: "Less and less, I think, grows the consciousness of seeking God. Greater and greater grows the certainty that he is seeking us and giving himself to us to the complete measure of our present capacity. That is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us. . . . There is such a thing as putting ourselves in the way of God's overflowing love and letting it break upon us till the response of love comes, not by struggle, not even by deliberation, but by necessity, as the echo comes when the sound strikes the rock." What language is this, for affirmation of infinite but tangible realities discovered in that world which Huxley found blank and bare!

I do not know that these are the best passages to quote for illustration of Brooks's mind concerning religion. Very likely they are not, for there are hundreds more to the same effect; but I wanted only a little sample out of the abundance. In this region moved year after year the thought and utterance of the man, and the action of his life. He lived in religion. There he found a splendid freedom, and his ample powers struck out in generous activity. He did not look into religion and into God as a bird may look from its nest into the open sky. He rose into religion and into God, and was there sustained. To him God was the greatest and most certain of realities. Christ has revealed God, and shown what manner of God he is, and to this man Christ stood for God: Christ in the infinite beauty and power of his character meant the meaning of God to him. God meant Christ, and Christ meant God; and under either name he had before

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him the reality which he felt to be the glory of this world and of all worlds. Accordingly his keywords were such as God, Christ, the soul, personality, love, life. The keyword of his later ministry was life. In those glorious years of spiritual power he used to say that he had only one text and one sermon, and the one text was, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." The soul's experience of inexhaustible, overflowing life in fellowship with the living God, this was his one theme, and this experience he helped multitudes to make their own.

What a contrast is this!—one man living a full and glorious life in the realm of religion, and the other absolutely without evidence that such a realm exists. One spirit strikes out successfully for flight upon a strong sustaining air, where the calculations of the other show nothing stronger than a vacuum. When such a contrast as this appears, we are compelled to say that one of the two men must have been right, and the other wrong. One may have been acting in accordance with truth, that is, with things as they are, but both cannot. Only one can have been justified in his position by the essential realities of existence. There was an element for the real support of Brooks's life in the spirit, or there was not. Huxley said there was not, Brooks said there was. If Brooks was right, Huxley was suffering limitations that robbed him of his birthright. If Huxley was right, Brooks, by all sound reason, was impossible. There is no need of affirming atheism and materialism out and out, in order to render Brooks and his life impossible. Such agnosticism as Huxley's will answer just as well. If one cannot legitimately affirm anything concerning the reality of God, the soul, and the eternal life, then the satisfaction, enthusiasm, exultation of Brooks in view of them was plainly quite unjustified, and can never be worthily entertained by a right-thinking man. If all men thought as

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Huxley thought, no man could ever live as Brooks lived. This Huxley knew. Brooks's faith had room for the science which was Huxley's life, but Huxley's agnosticism would utterly paralyze the religious action in which Brooks had his very being. Religion is real in one view of the case, and impossible in the other.

I have encountered this great practical question in reading the two biographies. It has come before me as a question of life and death. To me, I am not ashamed to say, a world without religion would be a world of death. You may call me too timid if you will, and remind me that I am shrinking from a condition that some men of excellent motives have not considered terrible at all. But I cannot help it. It is with a horror of great darkness that I think of a world in which the paralysis of an accepted agnosticism has fallen upon the religious energies of mankind. I have asked myself what it would be to try to live the life of religion in Huxley's world, and I have been impressed by the impossibility of even the attempt. I have looked upon the noble figure of Phillips Brooks as he moved among men, radiating a holy light and warmth on every side, nourishing the worthiest vitality of his generation by influence and example, and doing all this by himself living a life of strong endeavor and rich peace in fellowship with the God whom Jesus Christ made known to him; and I have asked myself what manner of world this would be to live in, if such a life were absolutely without just ground of being. It is very true that an honest man desires to see things as they are, and that if the real world is constructed hopelessly inhospitable to religion it is well that we all should know it, that we may school ourselves down to it. Nevertheless it was the shadow of the great darkness that I saw in reading the Life of Huxley, honest, fascinating and useful though Huxley was; and I rejoiced in the returning of the glad-some light when I turned from one biography to the



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other, and beheld Phillips Brooks living in God with the strength of a strong man and the freedom of an immortal spirit. The contrast of light and darkness that I beheld is the contrast of our age, and the question is the question of today. Was Huxley living without his birthright, or had Brooks no right to be?

On the face of it, it seems a rather serious indictment of a view of life that it would render Phillips Brooks impossible. If someone proposed a view of life according to which there was no legitimate place for the existence of science, or of Huxley as a man of science, we should look him twice in the face before we were sure that he was serious. We should say at once that there is something lacking in a view of life that makes no room for Huxley. But Brooks, it seems, may be out of the question. A view of life may be calmly maintained as the only tenable one, according to which such living as his is condemned as no part of true and well-grounded human living. It is not as if this view of life merely corrected errors in religion, simplified it, or offered it a better life. No, it is religion itself that must go, not only in the case of Brooks but in all his kind; not only religious life in poorer and darker minds, where ignorance and superstition reign, but religious life in the largest minds and the purest hearts—in Kingsley, to whom Huxley wrote, in Tennyson, in Cromwell, in Pascal, in Luther, in Paul, in Augustine, in Jesus Christ himself. Huxley was clear-eyed enough to see this. He calls attention to "the impassable gulf between the anthropomorphism, however refined, of theology, and the passionless impersonality of the unknown and unknowable which science shows everywhere underlying the thin veil of phenomena." To substitute for God the passionless impersonality of the unknown and unknowable is to abolish the religious life, and render impossible such men as Phillips Brooks. This, I say, seems on the face of it a rather severe indictment of



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a view of life. Religion is a large element to be blotted out as illegitimate. It certainly seems more probable that Huxley was living without his birthright, than that Brooks and all his kind are really and properly impossible.

So deep and radical a contrast must have had its causes in the two men. Can we find them? Can these two views of life held by Brooks and Huxley be accounted for in them? Yes. There is no difficulty, I think, in perceiving how they came to be held. Various causes may have contributed, but not many need to be called in. Of the two men before us, one was a student of man, while the other was a student of life below man. One found his data, his method, and his idea of evidence in the human world, the personal realm, the region of the spirit; the other, in the infrahuman world, the impersonal realm, the region of physical existence. Each lived in his own world and followed its ways; hence there came wide difference in their conceptions concerning man and what there may be above him. The explanation, I need not say, is of the deepest interest to us all, because the same two worlds are still offering their suggestions, and judgment between them has constantly to be passed.

We have seen Huxley devoting himself simply, honestly, and conscientiously, to physical science. He was a naturalist, a biologist, a palæontologist, an explorer of the living world past and present. His method was the strictest. Loose work he abhorred; evidence must stand the closest physical testing; inferences must wait for precision in the data. Although he looked reverently and obediently upon nature as the sum of decisive facts, still it was true that he looked down upon his field. He had to look down upon it, for it was below him. Nowhere within it did personality exist, or personal relations require to be considered. Mental activity in human ranges was not included within the matters that came before him. He

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was interested in tracing the evolution of mind in the animal world, and so far as his scientific studies led him to consider mind in man, it was by this avenue, from below, that he approached it. It was through exact examination of life below man that Huxley's methods were developed and his tendencies of thought were established. Nay, his work was mainly upon the lower forms of the life that is inferior to man; and it was wrought largely by examination of creatures dead. It was a dissected cockroach that was to give light to the correspondent who sat in darkness. Give light it could, of course, but only so far as a dissected cockroach can be illuminant—and there might be regions which it could not sufficiently light up. Without early training or predisposition of the religious kind, Huxley came into practice of close investigation, in the realm of existence that contains no developed personality and suggests no personal relations. The result, in his thinking, corresponded to the conditions. It is true that as for himself, living in the world of men, of course he knew what men know by experience of actual meanings, and lived in love, purity, and fidelity according to worthy human standards. But when he speculated upon the meaning of existence, the limitations of his method and his world were upon him. That man was to be estimated in the same manner as the world below him seemed to him both natural and necessary. The analogies of the lower world came up to govern his thoughts about the human.

In ethics, it is true, he came to another thought, and it is interesting to wonder what might have happened if he had lived long enough to be led to another step in the same direction. Concerning the practical relations of men among themselves, he perceived that man is not altogether like his inferiors; and in the famous Romanes Lecture of 1893 he maintained that the self-regarding method which made animal evolution successful was not adapted to ren-

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der human life successful. If only he had followed out this hint! But in what we call the spiritual relations of man he never found anything certified to him by the methods of science, and therefore could not affirm that anything certain enough to be acted upon existed there. The man of natural science, working mainly in the world below man, discovered nothing above man, and failed even to find what man has commonly regarded as the highest in himself. All this is nothing strange, it is the fruit of the method.

We have seen Brooks, too, devoting himself enthusiastically and conscientiously to human life. He loved human life, he studied it, lived in the thick of it, gloried in it as the swimmer glories in the waves, gave himself to knowing it, helping it, making it perfect. While Huxley was interpreting existence in terms of the cosmic order, he was reading it in terms of the life, relations, and experience of the soul. I do not know but that Brooks was as truly an expert in human life as Huxley was in life below the human. Personality, not included in Huxley's field, was the very center of his. For him the universe meant what the universe means in view of man the spirit. Consequently his formative and dominant thoughts were not those of Huxley. In Huxley's world the suggestive and ruling thoughts were such as order, structure, development: in Brooks's world they were such as love, trust, righteousness, aspiration, purity, spiritual motive. Huxley would learn by experiment, Brooks by experience. Upon the spiritual ideas and methods the structure of existence took form in the mind of Brooks, and he believed in the reality of a world where boundless scope exists for experience of the soul in the great spiritual acts and qualities. The existence that he believed to be real contained within itself eternal love and goodness, as well as gravitation and chemical affinity. A real basis in the eternal order for upward-reaching love and confidence, a

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solid foundation for those experiences which make life most significant and precious, he firmly believed to exist. He believed that the universe will accommodate man its inhabitant; it has room for his higher faculties and actions, as well as for his lower. The world of man must have a God, and only the world of a good God would contain man. By the methods of the nonpersonal cosmic order, Huxley was sure that no God could be found. By the methods of the personal life, Brooks was sure that he had found God and had the right to glory in him.

Now I am not suggesting that Huxley was wrong in using his method. He was not wrong, he was right. But the question remains whether his method is right for all uses. Does it apply to everything? or is there room in some regions for another method? The question is not whether physical science has a right in the world, but whether physical science has a right to the world. Can we learn below man all that we need for understanding man and for looking above him? Is there, or is there not, a mode of obtaining sound convictions respecting realities in the realm of the spirit, which investigation in the world below the spirit does not provide? Is it true, or is it not true, that the world of personal life is the world in view of which existence must receive its best interpretation? Is it or is it not the fact that only when man is considered can the riddle of existence even begin to be solved? Is the animal world or the human world our Rosetta stone for translation of the language of the universe?

This, I need not say, is no mere question of two men and their points of view: it is the question of our age. Physical science is offering its terms and standards for the expression and measurement of all that is. I recently read a commendation of the doctrine of conditional human immortality, on the ground that it was in perfect harmony with biological truth. It was assumed, appar-

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ently, that biological truth is truth enough to meet the case, and that we may justly infer our destiny from the destiny of other creatures that have breathed the atmosphere of our planet. So we often find ourselves invited to judge human questions in the light, or the darkness, of nonhuman considerations; and when we demur, and venture to propose the human as the test for judging the human, the spiritual for testing the spiritual, we are told that nothing is certainly known about the spiritual apart from the physical, and the tests that we know to be valid are those of the laboratory and others like them. Yet even now religion, willing to save its life, claims a hearing, and sound philosophy joins with it. Judge a tree by its fruit, and by its ripe fruit. Understand an evolving system in view of its highest part. Read the meaning of the world with, not without, the human. When the cosmic system has attained to the production of personal beings, then personal facts and relations are the elements supreme, and the elements indispensable for understanding of the system. The best spiritual experience of man is better evidence as to the significance of man and the reality of God than all that can be learned outside the human realm. So declares religion, claiming its right to live. Our two men in the lesson of their contrast are a parable for the world. The question between them is a vital question. If, as Huxley seemed to think, studies from the realm of nature below man are to decide all questions of the soul, religion is impossible, save through ignorance or self-delusion; but if the nature of the soul itself is first to be consulted as to the questions of the soul, then the scientifically wise are living without their birthright of religion and of God, and are blind to the truth that they have a birthright. This is the dilemma of our day, before which no thoughtful man can long stand uncommitted.

It is well that we discern the real dividing question of



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our time, and it was my purpose in the choice of a subject today to call attention to it. These two great biographies were my opportunity. We are always talking as if the great question of our time were some question of theology, but it is not; it is the question of religion. It is the question whether there is a legitimate and available place for religion in human life or not. This question is raised, as we have seen today, by the searching and honest study of the nonhuman world upon scientific methods. For religion the question of the day is really a question of life and death. Someone may think this the needless cry of an alarmist; and indeed I do not imagine that religion is about to die. Nevertheless it is not well to deceive ourselves as to the case with which we have to deal. Huxley was right in affirming that his method, consistently used as the one by which all facts of existence should be interpreted, rendered confident belief in God impossible. It did this for him, and it will do the same for any of us. Moreover, the question of life and death that is thus raised by the favorite intellectual operations of the age is reinforced by all that is materialistic and unspiritual in the temper and practices of the time. How much there is of this I must not stay to tell, but there is enough to keep religion far more on the defensive than it ought to be. The vital issue of our day is whether religion has a legitimate and effective hold on existence. Have we a right to religion? and if we have a right to it, can we keep it alive? Compared with this great issue the current questions in theology are but minor matters, and the points on which Christian denominations are divided are almost infinitesimal.

Whether we teach theology, or study it, or make use of it in preaching, or have simply the common Christian interest in it, there are certain things that we can do and stand for, and that we ought to do and stand for. In this



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last moment let me put some of them in few words, in the form of exhortation.

1. Insist upon the right of the soul to know its God. Hold fast to the birthright. Claim the heavenly liberty, the freedom of sons with the Father. Rise to fellowship with him so real that no doubt can rob you of your spiritual inheritance. Encourage all men to think of knowledge and faith toward God as indeed a birthright which no sound knowledge in other fields will ever justly require them to surrender.

2. Hold fast that the universe can be understood only in the light of the highest that it contains, and that hence the life of the personal spirit is the true interpreter. Claim and hold that the eternal realities of existence are such as will give true support to the normal and characteristic life of man, the highest being in the world. Find thus a good foundation for that freedom with the Father which it is your life to possess.

3. Construct your theology, if you have a theology to construct, on the basis of personality and personal relations. Simplify it to meet the demands of this idea. Make it straightforward, clear, uncompromising, in its omissions as well as its assertions, holding firmly and holding only what pertains to personal relations between God and men. If this makes a short theology, it will make one that stands close to true religion.

4. Steadily put the warfare of religion at the front, before all warfares of theology. Try to make the Christian people feel that the warfare of religion for its life is really on, and seek the unity of all forces that belong on the religious side. Deprecate divisions, avoid strifes among friends, and pray and labor for efficient unity among those who stand for the essential faith.

## REVEALED RELIGION

THE DUDLEIAN LECTURE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 1903

If the Honorable Paul Dudley could look in tonight upon his beloved Harvard, he might be surprised at many things, and perhaps not least at some facts about his lectures. Not to dwell upon his feelings at finding a Baptist delivering one, in a house sacred to the memory of a revered Episcopalian bishop, he might wonder greatly at the manner of interpreting terms familiar to him and written for permanency in his will. He expected the validity of Presbyterian and Congregational ordination to be a theme of lasting interest, and the Roman Catholic Church to stand as a permanent topic in polemics. And as to Natural and Revealed Religion, the distinction between them he doubtless considered clear, and finally established. How could either of these terms change its meaning? His will offers me a considerable range of topics, under the general head of Revealed Religion, but I propose to speak of Revealed Religion itself, and what we should understand it to be. If he were seated on the platform, he might think that on a theme so familiar he could forecast the lines of the lecture; and yet perhaps he could not. He would find points of view so changed, and the atmosphere that colors thought so altered, that he might scarcely know where he was, even on his own lecture platform. How far he would approve of modern discourse on Revealed Religion at the first hearing, I do not know: and yet I purpose to speak of the central substance of the faith.

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We can judge, approximately, what Dudley meant by his two larger titles. His will was made in 1750; and at that time Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature" had been fourteen years before the world. This great work took its title from the controversies of the time, and used words in the senses which they then bore. Doubtless Dudley, following Butler, meant by Natural and Revealed Religion about what Butler meant. How great a mental movement the intervening century and a half has registered we perceive, as soon as we breathe for an hour, so far as we can breathe, the atmosphere of Butler's "Analogy." We should be in another world if we could conduct our Apologetics on the basis of Butler's definitions, and induce disputants to meet on what he assumed was common ground. That can never be done again.

Yet Butler was a workman of the modern guild, for he was seeking to do exactly what is sought today by all who wish to find good foundation for religion. He sought to ground religion immovably, on foundations as wide as nature. A reader is at once impressed by the largeness of his scope. He is sure that the lasting constitution of the world is harmonious with religion. For Natural Religion he finds in the order of the world direct and sure support; and his whole argument is intended to prove that Revealed Religion, or Christianity, is no more exposed to valid objection than Natural Religion, or than the course of Nature itself. Here he shows a high and generous faith in the unity of the world and the religiousness of the universal order. If we moderns, with our altered conceptions of Nature, could accomplish in our day what Butler undertook in his, we should be benefactors to all coming time.

But Butler was working without much help from science in his understanding of Nature, without much

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help from history in his conception of Religion, and without much help from psychology in his doctrine of Man. This was not his fault, but the defect of his time. May our advantage over him not be wasted! I must glance for a moment at Butler's main definitions, because I need to use them as a background for my own.

I spoke of his assumptions of common ground for his argument. He begins with "taking for proved that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, and natural Governor of the world." Remember that he is arguing against opponents all the time, not constructing an argument to suit himself: Theism therefore is his postulate to which he assumes that his opponents will agree. Yet this is no part of religion; this belongs to the Constitution and Course of Nature. Religion is yet to enter. What then does Natural Religion say? It affirms, "that mankind is appointed to live in a future state; that there every one shall be rewarded or punished . . . : that our present life is a probation, a state of trial or discipline, for that future state." The common ground is Theism, and Natural Religion makes this life a probation for another, in which rewards and punishments await. And what of Revealed Religion when it speaks? That is its burden, for which a longer quotation must be made:—"that this world being in a state of apostasy and wickedness . . . gave occasion for an additional dispensation of Providence, of the utmost importance, proved by miracles, but containing in it many things strange and not to have been expected; a dispensation of Providence which is a scheme or system carried on by a divine person, the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world; yet not revealed to all, nor proved with the strongest possible evidence to those to whom it is revealed, but only to such part of mankind, and with such particular evidence, as the wisdom of God thought fit."

As to the substance of Revealed Religion, Butler briefly

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enumerates the doctrines which he considers it to include. Revelation reaffirms the teaching of Natural Religion, and adds to them the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ, who is the reconciling Saviour. Outside this center, he makes little specification of doctrines, for this is not his field. His purpose leads him to dwell rather upon the evidence on the strength of which Revealed Religion is to be received. Here his attitude is extremely suggestive. He makes careful argument against the alleged unreasonableness, or vulnerability, of the revealed substance; but a reader cannot help feeling that he puts the contents of revelation on the defensive throughout, and has not yet learned to trust their spiritual convincingness. Most distinctly does he declare his reliance upon other evidence. "Proved by miracles," he says, and he means it. With him miracles, in which he includes the fulfillment of prophecy, are absolutely indispensable. He literally stakes everything upon them, for he says, "If it can be shown that the proof of these [miracles] is absolutely none at all, then is revelation overturned." It is a bold statement—or else a timid one. It is true that he would let this "direct and particular" evidence be supported, or completed, by the "general and resulting" evidence, which he illustrates by comparing it to the "general effect" in architecture; but without the miracles, he affirms, nothing would suffice for proof of revelation.

Much of this has a far-away sound to us after a century and a half, and indeed it must. How changed is our conception of Nature, and how impossible to start an argument with Butler's assumptions! The revolutionary gift of science has come in, and we are asked to move Theism from one end of the argument to the other, from the place of an axiom to that of a conclusion. Change too has come upon our thought of religion, for we have begun to note the history of it. We cannot draw the line between Natural and Revealed Religion where Butler



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drew it, and our ideas of evidence in religion are different from his. Greatly altered also since that time is our idea of Man: and here we strike the road upon which I wish to proceed in unfolding the present significance of Revealed Religion.

The voice of Butler sounds out of the world in which man is regarded as first of all an intellect. The "Analogy" is a study in the interest of religion, but who would ever think of making an extract from it for edification? Everywhere is argument, and argument skillfully balanced against argument. This, I own, might be only the result of a special purpose, but it is more. We are in an atmosphere of intellectualism. The substance of revelation is addressed to the intellect. Its evidences are external, appealing to the intellect. Truth is stated, reasoned for, established, and that seems enough. Revealed religion is such a thing as miracles can prove, and as cannot be proved without them. The conviction that miracles are divine works is offered as sufficient to bring the conviction of the truths that are revealed.

This was no peculiarity of Butler, it was the method of the time. The whole Deistic controversy was conducted in dry air. Reasoning was judged competent to hold court and settle the questions of religion. God was transcendent, or at least outside, and warmth and glow from his presence were little felt or expected. But neither was this peculiar to that period. Religion has often had a dry intellectual atmosphere about it, and that for a sufficient cause. It has assumed that man, the being who is concerned in religion, is primarily a mind, with thinking and reasoning powers for the chief element in his constitution. This judgment belongs exclusively to no one age or school. Of course it has always been modified by the inevitable recognition of other facts; nevertheless for very long this conception of man as primarily an intellect has been quietly assumed, and has put forth a de-



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termining influence upon thought and life. The idea came naturally enough, and has seemed to deserve the prominence it possessed. It was by thinking that man found himself out, and discovered what his own powers really were. It was by thinking that man learned to rule himself, and came into possession of his means of power. What more natural than that he should accept the primacy of his intellect when it had done so much for him, and should theorize upon himself as first a thinker? Practice easily confirms the position, for there is no exercise so fascinating as thinking, and none that affords so fine a sense of mastery.

Accompanying this way of looking at men, there has come in a conception of truth and the mode of its influence, which has determined many things for us all. As is our idea of the being who is to be influenced, so will our idea be of the influence of truth upon him, and hence of truth itself. With man a mind, to whom thought is the primary function, the tendency will be to think of truth as something that can be stated, and brought home to intellectual apprehension. If we cannot state it, that only means that we have not got it yet: just so far as we have apprehended truth, we shall be able to express it and give it clear intellectual treatment. As to the influence of truth upon us, we are to be influenced by truth through thinking of it. It is to be brought to us by intellectual processes, and received into good and honest heads, and made influential upon our lives through conviction that it has been sufficiently established. Thus in the general thinking truth has come to be associated with statements, explanations, arguments, defenses, scientific proofs and philosophical presentations, until we scarcely know any use of truth at all, except to think about it. If I have overstated the case a little, no harm has been done. We all know that this general view of things has been abroad among men for ages.

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Here the idea of revelation enters our present field of thought; and it enters under more or less of influence from this idea of man. Revelation has long and widely been believed in. From primeval days it has been held that truth came to man not by discovery alone, but was sometimes revealed to him from a divine source. God had his ways with men: the divine flashed truth upon the human. Those nearest to God had words from him. The matters revealed to these have not been held as meant for them alone; they have been spoken, and written out, for the use of the many, and the uplifting influence of revealed truth has been accounted an element in the daily hope of the world. This has been a fact among all peoples. But where man was quietly assumed to be first an intellect, revelation was conceived accordingly. As man is, so will he be addressed. Thus the body of revelation comes to consist of definite truth, which is to reach him through his mind. Is he not chiefly influenced by what he thinks? Does not truth affect and control him by being thought upon? When God reveals truth to him, he presents it to his mind, which is his truth-perceiving organ. And revealed truth can be stated. It is such stuff as doctrines are made of, and creeds, and syllogisms; and it is to enter the affections and reach the will and bless the life by passing through the mind. And in this light it very naturally comes to be judged that revelation is confined to matters that man could not otherwise know. What men can discover or reason out, they may: what God offers is new truth, otherwise undiscoverable, beyond the reach of reasoning, perhaps above reason. And thus revelation stands forth as something special, occasional, transactional. On God's side it is a gift, on man's an event. It has its time limits, by its nature. Revealed truth comes to be a special deposit in human experience; God has given it and man must act upon it, and the

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dealing, in thought and consequent experience, with this definite gift from heaven is a part of man's probation.

This general idea of revelation has long been in the world, and still abides. Many who humbly glory in the Christian revelation conceive it as truth that can be stated, and would stumble greatly if they were asked to imagine any substitute for mental processes as means of bringing it home to the heart. And there are many who would stumble still more if they were asked to think of revelation as not merely a transaction but rather as a process, not limited to a moment or a period or finished once for all, but as a vital and undying element in the relation between God and men.

But in our time we think somewhat differently of man. Of course no one will understand me to mean that the intellectual has ever been taken to be the whole of man, or on the other hand that it is ever to be left out of sight in our portrait of him. But certainly intellectualism has lost its dominance in the fundamental definition of man, or is losing it. We begin to read our human processes in different order. Influences that may seem incongruous have conspired to give us a new lesson, and to psychology, to poetry, and to practical affairs we are indebted for an altered conception of a human being.

Our modern conception of man is more practical. To us the human being appears more as an actor, a putter-forth of energy. The primacy among his powers that was once allotted to his intellect is given more nearly, in our judgment of him, to his will. He seems first of all to be a will, a being to whom action is the first necessity. That which makes us most truly ourselves is our power to do. In the normal arrangement of our powers, knowledge and feeling, or feeling and knowledge if we choose to place them so, are servants of action, rather than ends in themselves. Action alone is the genuine expression of character. Even character itself, highly as we must prize

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it, is not intended to be a fruitless possession, an acquisition that may be regarded as its own end. Character has its uses: it is a trust to be employed, not a talent to be wrapped up in a napkin as a thing to be taken care of. Thought and feeling if they are alone are futile where action is possible, and ought not to stand as ends. As servants of the living man they find their true place in making his self-expressive action what it ought to be: but man has his final worth in being an actor who puts forth energy for worthy ends.

This change in our thought of man carries with it another. We find that when man the actor does act, he puts forth his energy under the influence of feeling, even more than of thought. Pictures of the human subject calmly reasoning out his course, and acting dispassionately in view of well-stated considerations that have convinced his intellect, will never again be taken as fair representation of the actual humanity. Far more typical is the picture of a man stirred to the depths, inspired by a passion, aglow with the feeling that existing realities have aroused, rushing forth to his act under strong impulse from within. It is true that this is not the whole of life, for many acts are reasoned out, or otherwise performed under mental persuasion; and innumerable deeds are done in routine, and have but faint character: but as for deeds that are most thoroughly characteristic and express the most of men, they may indeed have been justified by reasons, but even then they are oftenest performed out of the glowing heart, or else under the strong impulse of the moral sense. Love and hate, desire, hope, fear, conscience, ambition, aspiration, are the forces that do the work. Thinking precedes, accompanies and follows, but action, which is the crisis of life, seems to require the auspices of passion, affection, or inward need.

This is a revolutionary view of man, for it opens new phases of the manner in which truth becomes effective.

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On the old basis, truth does its work through the intellect, and becomes effective by being thought out, or accepted on evidence. So Butler planned. On the newer basis, to be influenced by truth is to be so impressed by some reality as to act in view of it. If we are actors, it is the will that gives truth the real answer. Mere contemplation is but cool injustice to reality: justice to reality consists in practical response. And if action springs more from feeling than from thought, it follows that the effectiveness of truth upon a man is determined largely by the way he feels about it. When truth has wrought such moral conviction, moved such affection, aroused such feeling, awakened such desire, stirred such passion, that a man will do the thing it calls for, then first has truth conquered him and done upon him its proper work. It is feeling that clamors for action: thought may be content without it. And so, with the modern thought of human nature, if we wish for action in which a man shall be his best, we shall do well to seek an influence from some great reality upon what we call his heart. What is needful is, that truth put forth some moving power, and the man respond.

If we think thus of man as actor, and as actor moved most by his heart, we have material for some fresh views of revelation.

Return a moment to the older view. If there is any such thing as revelation, it comes from God. It presupposes a God who desires to bring high truth to bear upon men for their good; and it implies, or means, that somehow, in accordance with his strong and friendly will, realities that have power upon human duty and welfare are brought home to human heart and life. Many have been the pictorial forms in which the act of revealing has been set forth. Revelation is conveyed by voice from heaven, by graving upon rock, by conventional sacred signs, by inward whisper to the soul, by inspiration of



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words to be spoken, by dictation of words to be written. Written records have been relied upon to preserve the body of truth revealed. Most of these portrayals suggest, or have been suggested by, the intellectual idea of man and truth. Truths undiscoverable have been given by God. They have been given in words, and are to be taken into the common stock of thoughts, mentally apprehended, spiritually accepted, and practically applied.

I am not ruling this method out: but I note that now we look into the face of man the actor—man upon whom truth is to be influential through his being moved by it. Man is now to be impelled. What then will revelation be?

Revelation may not always be the presentation of truth in forms for the mind. It may consist at heart in the setting free of a spiritual power to perform its impelling work. In accordance with the strong and friendly will of God, some divine, eternal, spiritual force, adapted to influence our life, may be started into effect, or placed in new conditions of power, where it will exert its proper influence in making character and conduct. Some great spiritual reality may be launched into effectiveness, so that it touches the heart and moves the springs of action. This will be revelation to man the actor, and revelation good and Godworthy. Evidently a truth that is thus launched into power need not be totally new, unknown and undiscoverable. It may be so, or not. But probably any spiritual verity set free for such divine conquest will be one that men know well enough to give it access to them, and yet need to know far better. It will have connection with what is known already, else it would be powerless, but it will be truth that the world is suffering for; and the result will be that men are aroused, inspired, and led to action, by the spiritual force that has been set free upon them. Such revelation will not need to be attested by miracles, or certified by fulfillment of proph-



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ecy. It is attested by its own evidence, and certified by its own reality.

Come now to the events in which our Christianity had its origin. Bishop Butler, and Paul Dudley, believed that when Jesus Christ appeared in the world there was made from God a revelation which has been effective ever since. I believe the same. And wherein did the revelation consist? The question is variously answered. To find the body of thoughts, the expressed truth, that God revealed by Jesus, we are referred to his recorded words; or to his words together with those of his disciples; or to the New Testament as a whole; or to the authorized tradition of the Church. Often a regular system of thought is held to have been revealed: I have seen a book entitled "A Handbook of Revealed Theology." I need not say that the element of clear and intelligible thought in the revelation of Jesus Christ stands fast forever: and yet there is need of another emphasis. I am well convinced that our modern thought concerning man and the influence of truth upon him is vastly nearer to Jesus' point of view than Butler's was. I believe therefore that we can grasp the meaning of Revealed Religion more clearly, and more Christianly, than Butler could. It was man the actor, man the will and heart, that Jesus Christ addressed, far more than it was man the thinker: and it is on the side of heart and action, rather than of thinking, that religion, in every age, most directly addresses itself to men.

This last statement is supported by all the definitions of religion. Religion is not first an element in thought, but an element in life. It implies thought, and includes thought, but it is primarily experience. It is the experience of man in having to do with God. It is the life he lives in relation with God. Religion has always been, as Mr. John Fiske so impressively showed, the response of life within to reality without, the answer of the soul to

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invisible powers that silently impinge upon it. It has consisted in the sense of God in the soul, bringing the sense of mystery, of duty, of need, of possibility. Out of this living sense of divine realities have come the acts of worship, the plans for winning divine favor, the institutions of religion, the statements of doctrine. Man was born to live in the world with God, and feel that he was living there; and religion is the phase of his life that corresponds to this phase of his being.

Who does not see that in this light the field of religion is the field for revelation? Here on the one hand are men, with feeling of unseen things, but vague, unclear, untrue, in spiritual perception; with conscience, but conscience unenlightened; with capacity for holy passion, but too unholy and sinful to be moved by it. There on the other hand is God. Men have called him many, but he has all the time been one. They have assigned to him a hundred characters, but he has always been the same,—holy, gracious, watchful over his world. With God as he is and men as they are and religion the meeting-place of the two, revelation seems the one appropriate thing, and the one thing certain. There will be manifestations of the eternal verities to the human mind, and there will come the setting free of the eternal realities to act with their appropriate power upon the human heart and will.

When did revelation in this sense begin? Since we believe in the God and Father of Jesus Christ, I do not see how we can fail to think that he has always been in communication with the human race. In accordance with that strong and friendly will of which I spoke, he has always been setting spiritual forces free to influence men for good. One summer Sunday morning, on my veranda, I read the late Mr. Fiske's "Through Nature to God," and found him saying that as vision is the response of life to light, and hearing is its response to sound, so religion is the soul's response to unseen reality. I remem-

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ber my strong inclination to write to the author and ask him how, as he conceived it, the spiritual reality, invisible, made its impression on the soul, and whether he was not postulating on the part of God, in all ages, the activity to which I would give the name of revelation. Because I am a Christian, I believe that God has always been sending forth helpful influences upon his human race. Poor enough the response has been, but God has never left himself without a witness.

But the Revealed Religion which is our theme tonight is that which came in among men with Jesus Christ: and so we have to ask how he fulfilled the idea of revelation, and what gift of truth and power he brought to the world. Both in Butler's sense and ours, Jesus Christ brought and imparted Revealed Religion. This of course is no new saying, it is the same old claim. But what has now been said may perhaps help us to set the claim in its true light. His gift is accurately described when we call it Revealed Religion, and the religion that he revealed is what the world wants today, and tomorrow.

It is often said that the conception of God which the modern world holds as vital has been derived essentially from Jesus Christ. Certainly this is true. Of course this does not mean that what he imparted had no vital connection with what was known before, or that no influence but his would have been contributory to our knowledge of God. Both these things would be impossible. Yet the God whom we worship differs immeasurably from any God who has been worshiped elsewhere than by Christians, and differs mainly because of Jesus' contribution to Revealed Religion. Then surely, we say, we shall be able to point out his contribution, and identify it clearly. But when we ask just what it was that Jesus revealed, or imparted, concerning God, from which came so great a change, the answer that we can give in terms of the intellect is somewhat disappointing. Prophets and psalmists



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had much in common with him. A comprehensive doctrine of God, with the qualities that Jesus emphasized set forth in clear relief, it is not easy to draw from his recorded words. Doctrinal statements did not constitute the heart of his revelation; but what he did impart, and how he imparted it, we learn quickly when we follow his leading. Jesus made revelation in the practical field of religion. God is the eternal reality which stands at the heart of religion: and Jesus placed this eternal reality in range with men, and men in range with it, so that its supreme spiritual power might go forth upon them. He flung forth from that central verity, God, a mastering force to take possession of human heart and will, and burn as a living power of religion in the human life.

Even in the moment that is now available the heart of his revelation may at least be dimly seen. Jesus spoke as one who knew God well, not in abstract fashion, but in personal manner. He lived the human life as one to whom God was all that God could be to one who loves and trusts him. Thus men beheld him, and thus he spoke to them,—men, to whom this one thing had always been lacking: God had not been to them all that God might be. To them religion was deficient, for God the reality had never come forth upon them in clearness and power, to make his impression on heart and life. They had not been overshadowed by the great reality, or lifted into high religion by the strong drawing of the living God. Groping after the divine fact, they had found it only in some partial way that disappointed even more than it satisfied their needs. What they wanted was a mastering sense of the God that is, and as he is: and this is what men want to this day, who have not learned it from Jesus Christ. Now came the revelation, the sending forth into heart and life of the spiritual power of God the reality. "See him," says Jesus: "Behold him holy, awful, glorious. But he is your Father. The all-holy God loves you, and

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hates your sin. All his desire for you is that you may be right, and fulfill yourselves in the right life, children in his family. He loves you with the only love that can break or melt the heart, the love of sacrifice. His heart bends to you, he bears your burdens and your sins, he loves you with a love of which the most self-sacrificing love you ever saw on earth is but an illustration. Trust him, live with him, fill your whole soul and life with the glad sense of his presence and his care: and he will make all things new. He will command your most honorable devotion, call out all your manliest powers, claim your noblest loyalty, and make you alive with life that will thrill within you as life eternal. He will make you hate evil, love your fellow men, help every good cause, and live the life of contagious spiritual health among men. You may live for him, and suffer for him and die for him, and be thankful for the call to die for so high a Name."

This, in the life and death of Jesus, was not cool teaching, but impassioned and passion-moving utterance. It was utterance of truth in the form of power. It would be possible to formulate this utterance about God into a doctrine for the intellect—and indeed some formulation of it was necessary, and sure to be made: but Jesus gave it as revelation for the heart and impulse for the whole being. He revealed God to be loved and lived with, God to be acted upon, God to be all that God can be to men.

Am I preaching? Perhaps I am. It is impossible to speak of religion without preaching—that is, unless one is content to speak of it far out on the circumference, and miss the point. But the time would fail me if I should tell of the themes for preaching which I have not even named, but which are involved in the simplest presentation of Revealed Religion as we have it in Christianity. The fact that Christianity has always been a religion of preaching is one of its best commendations as a religion of the revelation of the true and living God.



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It is fair to say that revelation proves itself actual by the fact that it reveals. When light comes, men see; and if there has been true revealing of God, we shall expect to see God moving gloriously in his world in consequence, and exerting the spiritual power of manifested reality. This is the due sequel of revelation, or, if we like to call it so, it is revelation continued. I need not dwell upon the fact that this is exactly what has come to pass. The spiritual power that sprang from Jesus is beyond our words. Some forty years ago the English-speaking world received into the body of its suggestive literature "*Ecce Homo*," a startling, inspiring, revolutionary study of the human life of Jesus. Over against the title-page stood the promise of a second book by the same author, to be entitled, "*Christ as the Creator of Modern Theology and Religion*." For some reason unannounced, the promise was never fulfilled: but that from the standpoint of "*Ecce Homo*" such a promise was made, is a fact worthy to be pondered. And the promise was a good one, for it spoke truly—save that it should have read, "*Christ as the Creator of Modern Religion and Theology*," instead of holding the order "*Theology and Religion*." He was Creator of Religion first, and of Theology afterwards. Creative in religion indeed he was. Back in the first Christian age we see his revelation of God in the very process of its work. This is what occurred: God, as he was known in Christ, became to men more of what God may be. Spiritual power streamed forth from him as the supreme reality, and men were impelled by it into newness of life. In a sense, after a time the impulse was lost: it was so imperfectly received and apprehended as partly to miss its hold, so that from simple, strong religion the Church turned to a life in which ecclesiasticism and credalism had an excessive share: and yet the impulse has never really been spent, but has renewed itself from age to age with the renewing of the need. Under the



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religious influence of Jesus men have been lifted into power to live according to God, responding to actual influence from the eternal holiness and love. Doctrine of God and the new life has come forth from the experience, and in turn has confirmed and clarified the life,—for Theology is the offspring of Religion, not its parent,—and the power of religion has always dwelt, as at first, in the vital entrance of the divine reality to the sphere of human love and will.

There is a fine picture of revelation and what it means, quoted by Principal Shairp from Thomas Erskine, one of the truest of all the sons of God. As I read it, let it stand as a parable: for humanity might speak thus of its need and its experience of the gift from above. Principal Shairp is telling his remembrance of a conversation with Erskine. "He spoke of the awful silence of God, how it sometimes became oppressive, and the heart longed to hear in answer to its cry some audible voice. Then he quoted that word, 'Be not silent to me, O Lord, lest if thou be silent to me I become like them that go down to the pit.' Then he added, 'But it has not always been silence to me. I have had one revelation: it is now, I am sorry to say, a matter of memory to me. It was not a revelation of anything that was new to me. After it I did not know anything which I did not know before. But it was a joy for which one might bear any sorrow. I felt the power of love, that God is love, that he loved me, that he had spoken to me'—and then, after a long pause, 'that he had broken silence to me.' As he spoke he touched me quickly on the arm, as if to indicate the direct impact from on high of which he had been aware." So in Christ has mankind received direct impact from on high, bringing in the sense that God has broken silence and that God is love, bringing a joy for which humanity itself may bear any sorrow.

The function of religion in the world, and the need of

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it too, is always the same: and in the Revealed Religion of Jesus Christ the function is fulfilled, and the need is satisfied, so well that we have no reason to ask for anything better, save as this may proceed to do its perfect work.

The service of religion is, to keep present in the common life and thought an actual mastering power from the unseen reality with which the soul has to do. The story of religion in the world is a tragical story, for the mastering power of the unseen has often been only too real when it was not most helpful. Religion has brought in the influence depressingly, and corruptingly. Dark and cheerless views, or corrupt and depraving views, of divine things have been impressive on the soul. In great parts of the world, we know, this is still the case. Even with the Christian revelation inferior views of God, born of human imperfection and sin, have mingled, to the diminishing of its power. Religious conceptions are not less influential for being inferior in moral tone: on the contrary they have a special grasp on imperfect humanity through their very imperfectness. But if we could get and keep, separate from all enfeebling intermixtures, the mastering power of God as Jesus brought it in, we should have at work incomparably the best power that the world has ever felt, and the power that it needs today.

Modern life is one-sided, with an overbalance of the visible and the visibly practical. The general life suffers for want of a right sense of the invisible: religious life from deficiency of religion, and Christian life for want of full Christianity. In a word, life suffers unutterably from the want of a living sense of the eternal goodness. Jesus brought that in, and the fullness of his gift is what is needed for the completion of the present age. Once more look at his gift. God, the most real of realities, present in life as sunlight is present in the day; true, pure, searching, judging, condemning, reproving, saving, heal-

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ing, cleansing ; God, gracious, trustworthy, helpful, comforting, strength-giving, inspiring, ruling all for a worthy end ; his reality the most refreshing and uplifting fact in time or eternity, the keynote of a new song that shall never die, the inspiration of hope and courage, of consecration and holy power, because the pledge of victory over evil : a God to live and die for with joy unspeakable—this is what Jesus Christ revealed, or released as a mastering spiritual force to do its work. I need not tell how deeply the modern age needs just this moral force. Many think the existence of such a God incredible in the age of science. Many think it is too good to be true. Many are dumb with doubt. Many resent it as too exacting. But all the world needs the sense of the reality of the God and Father of Jesus Christ ; and of this God Jesus is still the revealer. The world needs it for the inspiration of its higher hope, and the maintaining of the vigor of its higher effort. If we come under this influence to the full, we shall have the gift of peace in our thoughts of God, but peace will be only the prelude to the gift of power. Calmness will be the standing-ground for energy, and restfulness will pass over into hope that makes life strong. Nothing breathes power and purpose into a life like genuine faith in the God whom Jesus Christ makes known.

We are saying now-a-days that religion, to do the work of the present time, must take on a social aspect. Religion has been associated with individualism, and perhaps some of its excesses : it must show itself adapted to the field of solidarity. We are finding that man is a race, and beginning to suspect how much that means. With mankind bound together in mutual dependence, higher forces, coming in, will do well to reinforce the spirit of unity and common help : they cannot do better. A religion that keeps a man's eyes fixed on heaven, or even keeps his thoughts centered upon God, to the exclusion of

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his fellows, will not do. Men outside the Christian circle are beginning to talk in this strain; but so the Master of Christians talked from the beginning. This is the Christian doctrine,—wronged by selfishness and hidden under excessive individualism, but Christian originally and forever. One God, one family: one Father, God, many brothers, men: thou shalt love thy God, thou shalt love thy neighbor: love thy brother whom thou hast seen, or thou canst not love God whom thou hast not seen: he laid down his life for us, we ought to lay ours down for our brothers: "the soul is lost that's saved alone." The divine impulse is the social impulse. Revealed Religion means the setting free of the force of mutual helpfulness. A doctrine of helpfulness, professed, may be only the letter that kills, but the spirit of helpfulness is included in the Christian power.

Now my word is spoken, all but a final syllable. It may be thought that thus to insist upon religion as belonging first to man the actor is to run great risk of wronging religion in its intellectual aspect. Man can never cease to be a thinker, and the intellectual presentation of the substance of his faith will always be normal to him. He will need it too, for the wise guiding and true protection of his spiritual life. Is it not dangerous then to throw stress so strongly on the practical side, and attribute so much to the heart, the notoriously unsteady heart, with its affections and impulses? Should not this be balanced by the intellectual work, wherein great souls in all ages have so abundantly glorified God? To all of which I freely assent, but I defend myself by two facts. One is that the intellectual aspect of religion may well be trusted to take care of itself, and keep itself in evidence. It will not be forgotten. The other is that in the light of experience we certainly do need a new emphasis, and such an emphasis as I have been pleading for. It is in religion as it is in education. We have sought out our

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principles, and constructed our far-reaching educational systems, and built up our great plants, on the intellectual basis, for the training and the filling of the thinking mind of man; and when we have got them well at work, with their traditions growing into an orthodoxy, we begin to perceive that the human being needs to be trained as actor, worker, citizen, neighbor, social force, member of a race, brother to mankind, moral agent, center of radiation, child of God, immortal,—and that discipline of his intellect, useful as it is, may not cover all this ground. In like manner we have built our large institutions of religion on ideas, and drawn our lines of division along where differences of idea run, and given out that we stand for this or that intellectual presentation of Christianity—in which we have not been altogether wrong, any more than in our schemes of education too exclusively intellectual. But in the religious world we find a great unrest abroad, amounting to alarm, because of the advent of a new set of ideas, unfamiliar in this region, which seem to threaten the ideas we have held and with them our religion itself. The unrest is largely due to our having held our religion too much as a matter of ideas, and built too many ideas into what we looked upon as our foundations—too much as a matter of ideas, and too little as a living power of God. What we need most is a great renaissance of religion itself, as a vital force, to simplify our religious processes, to still our unrest, to banish our alarms, and to nerve us with spiritual might for the conflicts and achievements to which our age is summoned.



## THE YOUNG MINISTER'S OUTLOOK

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ANDOVER  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN 1903

It is an honor to stand in this place tonight. Many a great man has stood here in past days, and many a great word has here been spoken. I am reminded that Horace Bushnell, in 1839, here delivered his great address on Revelation, and made the first clear utterance of that heresy which darkened the immediate days with controversy, but helped to brighten the following time for the universal church. Dr. Bushnell was in Hartford, and by reason of a change in arrangements did not know till Sunday night that his address must be given here on Tuesday afternoon. Out of a full mind he wrote the entire address on Monday; then he rode all night by stage from Hartford to Worcester, drove from Worcester to Andover where he arrived just in time for dinner, and directly after dinner met his audience and made his speech. That was a thirty-six hours' work that needs no comment. It was too great to be imitated, but none the less it was a glorious example. Coming into the succession, I thought first of offering you a theological address; but my mood changed when I remembered the original missionary and practical intent of your Society, and I found myself inclined to treat a practical theme in your presence. I shall be best satisfied if I can look about me in the living world, and speak of the issues of life for the young men whom I am addressing. And so my subject



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is, *The Young Minister's Outlook*—which is certainly a practical theme.

This simple and familiar title suggests the question whether I can say anything but commonplaces on my subject. There are two reasons why I venture to hope for something better. For one thing, I address young ministers, and I am old enough to speak to them in the manner of a father. I have passed over their road, and gone on into the region to which it leads. Of the present outlook I can judge at least as one who has had experience. I am aware, indeed, how James Russell Lowell has confessed the danger that besets men of his kind—but not necessarily men of mine—in such a case:

“Poets, as their heads grow gray,  
Look from too far behind the eyes,  
Too long-experienced to be wise  
In guileless youth's diviner way;  
Life sings not now, but prophesies;  
Time's shadows they no more behold,  
But, under them, the riddle old  
That mocks, bewilders and defies.”

But I am no poet, and I am, as I grow older, a believer in the wisdom of age. I know that I know what once I could not know, and it may be that I can therefore speak a helpful word. And I deny that to me life sings no more. It prophesies, and the riddle is real, but it also sings—in a different tone from that of youth, but I often think in a tone that is richer, and that must be more like that of the song in which we hope by and by to join. It is thus that I defend myself before my own conscience, as one who may perhaps say something more than commonplaces about the young minister's outlook.

And, for another thing, nothing that relates to my subject is at present commonplace. Time was when the ministry was in some degree a profession of recluses; at least it was somewhat separate and special, and the questions that related to it were somewhat removed from the

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central field of interest. That time is past. Of course there are still questions that directly interest ministers alone, but they are few, and his outlook does not depend upon them. Once, the topics that were of immediate concern to ministers seemed unimportant to the many: now, they are of interest to all men. The ministry has moved out into the open. The young minister's outlook depends upon considerations that affect all people. That outlook depends now upon the state of the world and the state of the church; upon social ideals and religious experiences; upon the tariff and the denominations; upon the labor question and the higher criticism; upon education, civilization, sin, the slums, and the Spirit of God. Everything has to do with it. In a larger sense than ever before a minister of Christ must say, "I am a man, and nothing human do I count foreign to myself." And so my topic leads me out of the field of commonplaces, into the land of burning questions. If there is a workman here, or a housewife, or a boy in his teens, the facts and questions that I must touch will appeal to each of these, as truly as to the young minister of whom I speak. Watch me through, and see whether so much as for a moment I go outside the range of the universal human interest.

As to the form in which I shall order my discourse, perhaps I shall do well to report the contents of an imaginary question box. I will suppose that the young ministers in whose destinies I am interested have placed here, for me to answer, the questions that concern them as they face their outlook as it is today. Possibly I may be able to give the discourse rather more of unity than the actual question box would provide, for the questions will be my own. All that I desire is, that the matters most essential in considering the young minister's outlook may come before us. A young man, looking about him to find where he is, asks me, *This newness in our work as minis-*

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*ters—how much is there in it? They tell us we are going into untried regions. How far is it so? Are we going out to do a different work from that of our fathers?*

The newness is very real. Newness, of course, is no new thing, for no day is just like another, and no generation inherits the same as its predecessor. But the newness in the minister's lot today has one peculiarity. In an unusual degree it is felt in advance. For my part, I have moved into a new world in the course of my ministry: how different my present world is from the world of my youth, I cannot make young eyes see. But I did not expect it. No one told me. In my circle, at least, no one stood by to tell me how unlike the next length of the road was to the last. I moved on not foreseeing, and found things new, the road untried, as I went on. But now there is a keen sense of the newness of the future. One tells another of it, and young men look into one another's eyes wondering what it will be. Foreglimpses reveal but little, and beginners must needs go forward quivering with a sense of the newness of the road. Joshua said, of old, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," but now the word is that no one ever passed this way.

The newness is very real, and probably it is not often exaggerated in our forecasts. Like all newness in prospect, it is not half realized. Neither young eyes nor older ones can see just how much it means. The untried is always so. But if a young minister asks whether his work is to be decidedly like the work of his fathers, or like the work he is now observing in the ministry, the answer of truth must be that he cannot build upon a very close resemblance. Changes have come already, and influences that must make further changes are in the air. Nay, while we speak, change is going on. It is little to say that the average work of the minister fifty years ago will never be done again. What we have left behind is not the important element: the important element is

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what is coming. The beginner of 1903 may be at work in 1950. No one knows what the present rushing tide of change will bring before that time, but everyone must know that it will bring much that is new. I do not know what the average minister's work thirty years from now will be. What changes will have come in denominational forms and life, it is impossible to foresee, but the certainty of such change is looming in the air before us. Altered social conditions will bring unpredictable changes in pastoral methods. New modes of doing good will have to be accepted and put to use: experiments must be tried in full sincerity, and the method that does the good must be followed. Preaching is already changing, and is destined to change still more. Before ministerial careers that are begun this year are ended, there may be in use ministerial methods that have never yet been foreseen at all, and the work, at least in some instances, may be of a kind that would surprise us all if we could have a glimpse of it. Yes, there is very much in the newness of which we talk. Just what is in it, no man can tell, but the young minister certainly sets out upon a new road.

It would seem probable that in a new road there would be no ruts; but I fear this is a case in which so cheerful a prediction cannot be made. Be generous and forgive the mixing of metaphors if I say that in traveling this new road a minister can carry his ruts with him. This indeed is the supreme danger. The supreme need of our young minister, so far as methods are concerned, is flexibility. That which his outlook absolutely requires him to possess is a mind quick, versatile, ready, able to break with a custom, capable of attacking problems before unknown, competent to plan and undertake the service that is demanded by conditions that are new. Life among us is even now rushing on into forms that render many of our methods obsolete, and if our minister has neither heart nor head for adapting his work to the neces-

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sities of his hour, he will miss his opportunity and invest his labor without returns. Quick work is what the church must have or be left behind. The young minister's outlook shows him a place where he will be needed as inspirer of quick resolve and wise, swift judgment in the people he leads; a place where he must be ready for new enterprise and able to seize the moment when it comes. One man will have to meet this condition in one form, and another in another, but this outlook, in some form, lies before every man whose face is turned toward the ministry of the future. "New occasions teach new duties," and it is indispensable that our minister be a man who can discern the occasions and learn the duties.

This looks exacting, and exacting it is. Also the future looks uncertain. If the work is thus unpicturable beforehand, and no one can know just what it is to be, a question of practical wisdom may arise. How many will be needed? How many ought to prepare themselves? and so someone asks me, *Are young ministers too many? Or are there not enough?*

It is not an easy question to answer whether there are too many ministers, and whether too many are seeking to become ministers. Sometimes it seems as if there were too many, as when some important church needs one pastor and is told where it could get a hundred. Sometimes it seems as if there were too few, as when the same church out of the hundred can scarcely find one who will do—too few, at least, of the right kind. I shall not attempt to decide whether there are too many ministers, or whether too many young men are entering the ministry. But one thing it is right to say. If among the young ministers seeking entrance to the work is one who has been moved like a chessman thither by circumstances or by friends or by inertia or by unworthy ideals; if there is one who feels no inward urging and is aware of no message that he must deliver; then there is one too



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many. However the general fact may be, one can be spared. The outlook is exacting. One who has no impulse and no message ought not to be attracted by it. No message, no minister, ought to be the rule.

No message, no minister? and what is a message? A message is something, one's own, that one feels he must utter, because he knows it to be needed. This at least is the ordinary and first-thought definition of a message. I am reminded that long ago I had occasion to attempt a definition of preaching, and found it no easy matter to frame a definition that would cover just enough and not too much. Recently I attempted it again, this time not attempting to draw the line so closely, and I said, Preaching is public personal utterance of religious truth, for personal application. It is public utterance of what is one's own in religious truth, that others may take as their own and put it to its use. Thus it is the delivery of a message. Nevertheless, though this is all true, the first-framed conception of a message needs to be enlarged, for the deep good reason that it seems to lay the sole emphasis on words. The snare of the ministry is the prominence of talk. Speech, glorious and useful gift as it is, becomes our peril. We are expected to talk, and compelled to talk, until we are in danger of thinking that because we have preached a truth we have practiced it and that when we have uttered a message we have done it justice. Our own time, with all its faults, is coming to have this virtue, that it asks more and more for what is real; and the young minister's outlook reaches on into a life in which his message will need to be conceived in other terms than those of speech. A message is not merely something important, one's own, that one is impelled to put into words. A man's message may be something that cannot be put into words: it may be some service that one desires to render, some work of helpfulness for which one is impelled to offer himself. Along with



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the strong impulse to utterance in words, there may go, and there ought to go, the strong impulse to utter one's heart in work, and be a servant of men who can be helped. God forgive us for having pictured our work as a service of talking, and help us to portray it more and more as a service of living, planning, doing, for the good of men. Taking the word in this broad twofold meaning, of word and deed, we are surely right in saying that the rule ought to be, no message, no minister. Our young man will find himself where if he has no message he has no rightful place.

*What is the nature of the message, in this time of newness? someone asks me next. What ought the young minister to feel himself impelled to deliver? Is the needed message social? How much is there in the frequent claim that the message of the ministry must now be in a new sense a social message?*

In a true sense, yes, the message must be a social one. There is much in this frequent claim. Two great facts go to make this true. The problems of modern life are mainly the problems of living together. How man ought to live with man, trade with trade, class with class, nation with nation,—these are the questions of today, and will be the vital questions through more than one long lifetime. Almost all the living questions of the world resolve themselves into this one great question. How labor and capital should live together; whether nations should trade with or without tariff restrictions; how housewives and servants should deal with one another; how cities should be governed; what the rich should do for the poor; how prisons should be conducted; what should be done with fortunes acquired by fraud or by oppression; what public education should be; what the church should expect to do for the general welfare:—all these questions and a hundred more are alike,—they are forms of the social question, which is very nearly the one large question of life

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today. Now that intercommunication has brought the world together, and the crowding of life has forced men into new forms of contact, all problems are social problems, and of course all social problems are ethical problems. The reforms and betterments that are now required must be made by movement of groups or masses; they cannot be made by individuals acting separately. A long day of individualism has been upon us, in which the separate person has stood forth to claim his liberty and his other rights, and has been appealed to as the one from whom the needful gifts for mankind must proceed. But as soon as individuals stand out well defined, they stand in groups, and the groups must get on together; and the period of grouping which inevitably follows the age of individualism is now upon us. Accordingly, we must now seek to move upon masses of men. We have to teach social duty and impel to right social activities. No force for improvement will be most effective in the immediate future, or, apparently, in the long future, that is not a genuine social force. Such is our young minister's world, and it cannot be changed for him. He will find himself where theories or gospels that do not go beyond individualism fail to do the work that he desires to see accomplished. He must have a social message, a word and service of social effectiveness, or fail.

This is one fact: the other is that, far more than we have perceived, the message of Jesus Christ is a social message. This is no new word, but it is far more nearly new than it ought to be. In the days of individualism we have taught about personal salvation, separate experience, and individual effort: not about these alone, but about these predominantly. We have insisted upon the duty of fellowship and helpfulness, but principally within the brotherhood. We have not come to full discernment of the social power that our Saviour placed in our hands. By and by we shall notice how little Jesus said about

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saving our own souls, in comparison with what he said about living in righteousness, love, and helpfulness toward men around us. Some day we shall take to heart what it would be for Christians to live in all the relations of life in the genuine spirit of Jesus, to help others to do the same, and to plan that all might be able to do the same at the best advantage. Some day we shall have visions of the church of Christ bending its best endeavors to this task; and some day we shall see the living church doing this. All questions of living together ought to be judged in the light of our Lord's principle and method of living together; and who should apply themselves to this work of judgment but those who love the Lord and bear his name? Yes, our young minister, if he well understands his gospel, may expect to develop a social message. He has the material for it. Out in the thick of life, it will come to him. All social betterment lies within his field.

But human movement goes by reactions, and we must be on our guard. We have long had our gospel of individualism, and now there may easily be danger that a young minister may react away from it, in his zeal for his worthy social methods. Charles Kingsley, if I remember rightly, allowed himself to speak disparagingly of people who are seeking to save their own souls. I think he called them poor beggarly souls, and intimated that souls whose salvation was sought were scarcely worth saving. He was too good and too human a man to mean that, but he said something to that effect, and he so illustrated the reaction that I mean. Before us is a hard task, to reconcile the individualism without which the gospel is of no effect, and the appeal of social duty that is long to be upon us. It is profoundly true that without a genuine individualism the gospel is dead. We may try to turn attention altogether to the social problems and the social duties, using those words in a broad sense, and leave the question of the individual's status out of sight. We may

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assume that if we stir the social impulse the individual relations and character will take care of themselves. We may assume this and act upon it, but if we do we shall be rebuked by the result. We shall find that we have been trying to make ideal members of society out of persons who have not the root of the matter in them. There is no substitute for a right personality, and there is no substitute for that good reality which our fathers called personal religion. You and I need to be set right in our higher relations, and held fast in the noble bonds of a divine fellowship: we need to be transformed into the likeness of Christ if we are to live among our fellows in that likeness: we need the redemptive work to be wrought in us, if we are to take the place of redeemed men among men and hold it successfully for the common good. And so our young minister must blend with his social message a personal message which is much the same as that which generations before us have heard. You will not understand me to be setting the two parts of the one good over against each other in exclusive contrast: but speaking in the large it certainly is true that the personal experience and transformation is the stem on which the fruit of social power for good must grow. Sociology does not save. It cannot save the student of it, neither can it save society. Sociology is not salvation, any more than physiology is health. Health is fullness of life—and so is salvation, whether of a man or of mankind. And so the old individualism of the gospel is not to be disparaged or outgrown. It is to be maintained, and carried on to its rightful applications in the great social fellowship.

Upon this I draw out another question. Doubtless it has been asked and answered in the young minister's experience, and yet it is so central to all true thoughts about his outlook that I am impelled to lead him to consider it again. We are in a new world; a man must have

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a message; his message must be social, while yet it never forsakes the Christian individualism: *What then is the message? What is the point? What is the ideal our young minister must set himself to seek? and what, from the nature of the ideal, would seem to be the chief reliance, the agency or force of greatest power?* This group of questions I may ask as one.

For doing the new work which is both individual and social, a man must have vision of his end, and true judgment as to means. Vision of the end will be enlightening as to the character of the means, and yet not even this will be so enlightening as to leave no place for wise discernment. Always must a man be alert for finding the right means, but first of all he needs to know what he is seeking to accomplish. What is it then? What will the vision show?

I have spoken the word already, but not with full emphasis, and it must be uttered again. Fellowship with Christ, this is the end that a Christian minister seeks to fulfill. That human beings may come to think with Jesus, to love with Jesus, to judge with Jesus, to act like Jesus, on all subjects, in all relations, and in every part of life—this is the end in view. Perhaps we have not set our aim in so simple and clear a light as this, but this is what it is. Jesus Christ is to us the expression of the living God and of all right life and being: he is the available representation of the eternal goodness. In proportion as his mind is breathed into us and becomes our characteristic, we are right in the ruling principle of life; and the Christian endeavor has for its aim and end the bringing of all men and all life into this moral and spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ. When souls think of God as Jesus thought of him and feel toward him as Jesus felt; when men live with God as Jesus lived with his Father in the spirit and power of religion; when neighbors live with neighbors and friends with friends



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under the influence of the mind and character that we know in Jesus; when the world's business is done according to the mind of Jesus; when the nations are governed in the light of his principles; when class and class, rich and poor, labor and capital, nation and nation, act toward one another in fellowship with his heart and judgment; when questions as they arise are decided in his way, and the large movements of the masses of humanity proceed in fellowship with the desire of Jesus concerning human affairs;—then will have been fulfilled the purpose to which our young minister is devoting his life,—and not till then. Into the judgments that are thus proposed fanaticism need not enter. Applications of the mind of Jesus to facts as they appear will not be always easy, but the main idea is clear. The minister of Christ gives his life to produce in men religiousness in the Christian sense, righteousness in common life, love toward men with its helpfulness, and brotherly and intelligent application of these to the whole of life. When we are in fellowship with Christ we shall be in fellowship with God, and when we are in fellowship with God we shall be right. Fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is a sufficient guide, when once we know how to follow it, to all success in all parts and kinds of human existence. Any work in life that cannot be brought into this fellowship is not worthy of a man; and there is no virtue or grace or holy work, for individual or for multitude, that is not an act of fellowship with Christ, and with God whom we know in Christ.

How noble and winning a vision! How simple is the principle, how glorious the effect! Let us bow our heads in gratitude, that we are permitted to devote our lives, in word and deed, in thought and labor, for the accomplishing of so simple and high an end.

The nature of the vision determines some things, as to the character of the means upon which our young minis-



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ter, seeking this end, must place his main reliance. Much may be done, no doubt, by comparative indirection: much may be truly accomplished by means that do not go to the heart of the matter. Such efforts, and their results, are to be thankfully welcomed, so far as they go. But for bringing men, and life, and society, into the righteous and gracious fellowship of Jesus Christ, there are some agencies that are not central, and cannot be relied upon as the chief. Social activities by way of reform, taken by themselves, cannot be the central means, for they need inspiring with the mind of Christ before they can fully attain to the end. Nonreligious philanthropies are good, and useful, and will not fail to bear their part in the betterment of the world, but it is plain that they lack something that is yet to be desired. No, these are not the main reliance, nor can they be. There is no substitute for religion. The vision tells us so. The mind of Jesus Christ, with which we seek to bring men into fellowship, was first of all a religious mind. If there had been no Father's face for him to look up into, Jesus Christ would have been impossible, and there would have been no mind of Christ to draw us into fellowship with itself. In fellowship with Jesus, religiousness is primary. It is the uplifting, transforming, motive-yielding element. It is the element that makes all the rest new. And so the young minister looks out into a work in which religion, or life in close fellowship of heart and will with God, is the main agency and the main reliance for success. He must be religious himself, and religion must give character to his appeals to men, and religiousness in the men whom he influences must be his chief reliance for bringing them into the richly various good life to which he seeks to lead them.

So the young minister will discover, sooner or later, that he needs to be himself a religious man. That, I know, is not the easiest thing to define, and one may pic-

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ture religiousness in old and familiar forms, while another conceives it in some more modern manner. In many forms indeed it may legitimately be manifested, and I offer no counsel that looks toward using shibboleth-questions and establishing narrow tests. But the inspiration of his life must be found in God, and in personal dealings of fellowship with God as he is known in Christ. A young man may react from pietism, as he may call it, and think that he can draw all the motives he needs from the work itself; and so he may stir about in activities that move on the earthly level, and have no vital connections for his soul above. But it will not do. He may not know that he needs more, but he does. Only what is born in heaven is powerful for heaven upon the earth. Only God in man can bring men to God. But there is no need of deep statements here, for even the most business-like formula of a minister's work proves the point. The man must be on the side to which he wishes to bring others. One who is seeking to make a more religious world must be religious. The reality of religion is the hope of the world, and without the reality of religion no man can count upon helping strongly in the fulfillment of that hope.

By the same token his work must be religious. It is easy to say that the distinction between secular and religious is antiquated now. I hope it may become so, but let us take pains not to abolish it in the wrong way. Do not bring the religious down, draw the secular up. Beware of supposing that the uniting of secular and religious has yet been rightly made. The suggestion has arisen that all the secular is sacred now; but the danger remains, that the secular will too much swallow up the sacred. The young minister's hope lies in a work that keeps religion unsecularized, and gives it the first place.

After the insistence upon religion, another question comes at once to hand. Out of his recent thoughts a

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young minister asks me, *What then is the vocation of theology? We have been studying it here three years, and it is not to be useless, surely. What is to be its function in our future work?*

Yes, we teach theology, and we study it. Whether our schools teach altogether the right things, I am by no means sure, though I know that in some matters our curriculum is right. Our successors, soon or late, may perhaps be able to adapt the teaching more closely to the need. Toward better adaptation we have been growing, for theology in our time has been changing, and is changing still. It is growing simpler, less abstract and metaphysical, more direct and practical, more true to the spirit of religion. In all our schools of theology this healthful change has more or less been going on, and thus the study of theology has been advancing in fitness to be a young minister's genuine helper toward his work. Our Seminaries can make great improvement yet, in fitting men for the actual work that lies before them, but certainly they now give a young minister something that he should find no difficulty in using to great advantage. He asks, however, how he is to use it, and in what manner it is to serve him.

It is the function of theology to clarify the message. The message that a man has to deliver needs to be clear, straightforward, self-evidencing. If it is a message in words, it needs to be thus clear in thought: if it is a message in work and service, it needs to be thus clear in motive. Theology is the clarifier of the Christian message, both in motive and in thought, for the minister's own mind and for the minds of the people whom he seeks to influence. It is the vocation of theology to put the central truths in the center, and help them to be dominant in practice. Theology, when it is rightly conceived and used, lets the first truths of religion have their way, and helps them to their opportunity. It clears away

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impossible ideas, that may have come over from days when they were not impossible. It traces valid connections of thought, and substitutes them for connections that fail. It thus gives the few supreme realities of Christianity their rightful place and their opportunity to make their own simple and glorious system about themselves. It does this noble service to the minister himself, clarifying his message as nothing else can clarify it; and this it does, or may be made to do, for the people to whom the message comes. A rightly made theology brings in simplicity of thought, and at the same time inspires simplicity, directness and power of motive. It is the minister's helper in all good work.

The young minister's outlook covers a period of growing power for simplified and clarifying theology. We are getting out into the open, where vital thinking is welcome and every man may do his own. We shall always be truly indebted to the conservative impulse, which knows our inheritance is too precious to be squandered; and the substance which we thus inherit and hold fast we shall turn to the uses of our new time with an eager heart. There will be theological controversies still in the opening period, and our young man will not live to see the day when they all are past. But this is one of the good things about beginning now, that theology can be a guiding light, an instrument of usefulness, an inspiration to the new works of the new days, as it never could before.

*And what about the Bible?* for no account of the young minister's outlook would be complete that passed this question by. *Are we to have a Bible hereafter? of what use is it to be to us? and how are we to use it? What is the outlook as to the use and usefulness of the Bible?*

To which I answer, Do not worry about the Bible: use it. The outlook goes out into a period in which the min-

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ister will have a Bible to use, and will have a duty to put it to the high uses for which it has been prepared.

In fact, this is in general one of the joys and glories of a minister's calling, that he is called not so much to establish truth or to discuss it, as to employ it for a high purpose. No man has achieved a full mastery of a truth as long as he is seeking to establish it, either for his own mind or for others: mastery has come only when he is able to wield it as an implement of power. Discussion, proof, removal of objections, may be necessary, but it is not the normal use of truth. I lately heard a sermon on Jeremiah's story of the potter and the clay, in which the preacher never alluded to the ancient uses of the scene, and never hinted that anyone had ever had the slightest trouble over the idea of the clay in the potter's hands, but simply went on and unfolded the true meaning, as if no other had ever been thought of. Wield the truth for a purpose, and you are using it aright. Put the Bible to its use as if its use had never been questioned, and it will not disappoint you, but will serve your highest end.

The time has come for this, and for special emphasis upon this. The Bible has been under examination, and still remains so. Under all discussions of Christian theology has lain the question what the Bible is, in what manner it teaches us truth; and to this essential question the labor of modern students has been seeking a true answer. A true answer is gradually coming forth. There are many among us who have supposed that out of the inquiry would come forth settled doubt of the value of the Bible. How often are we warned that we shall be expected to tear out and throw away first one part of our Bible and then another, till we have none left! In consequence, some men have been timid about using the Bible freely. Some have admitted the fancy that other writings were going to prove just as useful. Some have



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been influenced by the inequality that they found within the Bible, and have held back from confident resorting to it such as once they practiced. Yet somehow the Bible does not go. Its value has not departed. Examination is showing where the value of the Bible lies. Its power of ministering to the religious life stands unchanged; and it is time for us who believe in this incomparable religious value to testify to our confidence by freely putting the Bible to religious use. Take up the book of Jonah, and allow it to utter its great religious lesson, perhaps the highest thought of God that the Old Testament contains—a lesson concealed by age-long talk about the whale. Make the book speak at last with its true voice and bring its own revelation. So everywhere: learn the deep lesson, hear the voice of God in spiritual truth, and fearlessly turn the Bible now to its full religious use. The time has come for this. Reliance upon the old external witness for the Bible has yielded to better evidence of its abiding value. The inspiration that commends it is internal, not external. Make the Bible speak, to your own soul and to your listening people, with its own voice of divine reality. Be led by it into deeper life, and use it to bring others there: it will not disappoint you. You will be using it as your fathers did not use it; but never suspect that there must be loss of religious power, and you will find no loss. Only bring out the religious value that exists. Show that the value is there, by using it. Put your Bible to this highest test, and you will be glad that you ventured on such confidence.

I have fallen to exhorting my young minister; but it is only in order that I might show him his real outlook. His Bible is not perishing out from his hands. He must let the discussion go on, never wishing it to cease; he must keep along with knowledge of it as it goes; but he must know so well the religious value of the book that he shall never cease to be using it for the highest purposes, and



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never doubt its virtue in his work. His outlook covers a region of the future in which this will be the right way.

One question remains upon which a word must be spoken. My very title carries the promise of such a word. I have been speaking of the young minister's work in its newness and greatness, in its social aspects and in its religious character. Any fair view of it is fatal to easy light-heartedness as one moves on into it. It is a work of deep joy, but of unfathomable seriousness also. *How favorable are the conditions?* I may be asked. *What is the outlook with regard to helps and hindrances?* *What of the night, and what of the morning?* *Is the age helpful?* *Is there a reasonable basis for courage in the general character of the atmosphere of our time?* This every young minister needs to know, and has a right to ask, for it is important that one be able to judge how much is against him and how much is on his side.

It is too hard a question to be answered in a word. Any short answer to it would be half true and half false. A true judgment will jump neither at optimistic hope nor at pessimistic discouragement.

Reaching out into the future are many influences strongly favorable to the young minister's work. Our age, with all its faults, has developed strong moral interest. The ethical sense has certainly been growing: it is still imperfect in deplorable degree, and in need of strengthening and guiding, but it is real, and it is increasing. There is such a thing as a public conscience, and every day is coming to be a day of judgment to deeds that are wrought in the face of mankind. That makes, just so far, a good world to work in, and the minister misses his opportunity who does not take comfort from this fact and use it constantly as a help. Our age is insistent also, respecting religion, that if it be anything it be real. "The day" is already declaring whether the works of men who claim the name of Christ shall stand or are fit only to be

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burnt. Blindly enough, it is true, and often with stumbling judgment, the world is moving on toward the land of genuineness. It respects no religious voice that rings hollow: it damns hypocrisy. And we may thankfully add, the world in our time has deep and honest reverence for Jesus Christ, and is coming more and more to think of God as Jesus revealed him. Faulty indeed is the discernment of the world when its Lord stands forth to view, and yet I need not dwell upon the well-known and welcome fact that the one commanding figure upon the field of life today is the figure of Jesus. One who says the right things about him will strike in among confirming judgments in the general mind; and so will one who says about God such things as Jesus said. Moreover, the spirit of human helpfulness has experienced a large awakening. It is immeasurably far from having the field to itself, and its presence only accentuates the sharpness of human selfishness that is abroad: but the helpful spirit is doing innumerable works for the common good, and in this, just so far, there is fellowship with the mind of Christ. And in the modern enlargement of thought, in the growth of mutual acquaintance among men, in the employment of more rational methods in thought than were formerly current, in the expectation of the age that new things will of course be presented to the mind—in all this there is much that calls welcomingly to our young minister as he turns his face outward to his field. It ought to be an irrepressible necessity of the Christian heart to recognize all congenial and helpful influences, and make the most of them. This has not always been done, but we shall be unpardonable now if we call friends enemies. There is very much in the times to render the young minister's outlook hopeful.

It would be pleasant to stop here, and leave the outlook clear in helpfulness, but no one imagines that to be possible. To call the age on the whole helpful to the minis-

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ter's work would be to speak untruly. I cannot in a brief moment tell all that this means, or even gather the main facts together. I can only show where some dark places in the outlook lie. We all know that the present is a rushing, whirling time, a time of swift and interesting change. It is a day of new things, and of new things that charm but grow quickly old. It is a time that dazzles with largeness. It is a time of keen devotion to material interests, a day of ambitions, an era of eagerness. It is generally understood among the people that religion is not what it used to be, and so it is assumed by many that it is nothing at all. Attention fastens upon things that perish with the using, and the things unseen and eternal are easily forgotten. This indictment does not tell all that is true about the age, but what it tells is true, and in such an atmosphere, however modified by its better qualities, the young minister is to live and do his work.

Now a minister, if he is what he ought to be, is a man who takes his life and calling seriously: that is to say, he takes religion seriously. It is his aim that religion shall do its real work, and to this he is devoted. The form in which he takes religion seriously may be old or new; but he believes in the living God, and in bringing the saving and transforming power of God into this present life, without delay. But the world about him does not take religion seriously in great degree, and is not anxious to do so. This does not mean merely that the present world revolts from old forms of doctrine, or has ceased to enjoy old modes of worship: it means that this present world is not seriously endeavoring, or consenting, to take the holy God and his will into its life and be transformed by him in its doings. Neither salvation from sin by the grace of God, nor resemblance in life to the holiness and love of God, is taken seriously, in the large, as an object of aspiration, prayer, and endeavor. What I said about the growing ethical sense is true, and yet the people in

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whom that ethical sense is growing have not reached the point of yielding to it. They apply it to one another, but not so much yet to themselves. And religion demands that they apply it to themselves, and learn thus their evil, and open their hearts to God who will transform them. The "hard sayings" of Christianity, recognized as such, were once doctrinal. It is not so long since they were mainly so, and so to some extent, and in some quarters, they still continue. But the day of that is rapidly passing, and now the hard sayings of Christianity are mainly—as your own Dr. Tucker reminded us in an address the other day—ethical. There is a vast amount of honesty in the world, and of purity, and of justice, and of unselfishness: and yet go and insist steadily that society take honesty seriously, and purity, and justice, and unselfishness, and that society steadily work out its schemes of life, private and public, under the instruction of those godlike graces, and you will soon learn what the hard sayings are. It is true that this is nothing new, but that is just the point: it is the same old story, this is a sinful world. It is a sinful world with much good in it, but it is a sinful world; and in such a world the minister's outlook lies. If anyone expects that the spirit of the age is to bear him up in genuine religious service, and make it easy for him, he is doomed to disappointment. If anyone harbors the thought that all is coming his way because he has modern ideas in religion, he will discover his mistake. Some very ancient things are still true. The work of God in the world is still a work against great difficulties. The age brings its helps, but it offers also its great obstacles. In every quarter, helps and obstacles lie side by side. One quarter in which the young minister who understands his calling will find his greatest helps and obstacles is the church itself. Here he will meet the men and women of insight and consecration, souls that discern the need and are ready with their lives; and here, of course, in the

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church, he will have his platform, his standing-ground, his opportunity. The church will be the living organism through which go forth the energy and effort that God uses him to inspire. But the church as a whole, or any church whatever, is very far from being now the body of Christ, the quick-living organism that responds to Christ's indwelling will as the body of the trained athlete answers to the command that he lays upon it. The church is not largely awakened to the necessities of the new time. The church has not perceived that the age of individualism is passing into a larger and more significant day. The church still holds self-edification as the chief end; and to hold to self-edification in a time when the deepest heart suggests service and self-sacrifice is to lose the point of edification itself, and fail between two conceivable successes. The young minister's outlook stretches out over a period in which, not altogether but in part, he will be required to awaken the interest of his natural allies and helpers, and train them to a work the need of which they have not yet clearly perceived.

Why picture such an outlook? Why not let the young man think the age is with him? Because that would probably result in his being with the age. A man who goes out under Christ's name expecting harmony between himself and the surrounding world will find it, for it will exist: but the lone man will simply have made the vote unanimous. What would you have? When did the good cause ever have an easy course? When did right and wrong ever live together without conflict, or Saint George and the dragon meet without need of a sword? Prophets, apostles, and the Lord himself have done battle. What would you have? It is hard work, and that is the glory of it—hard work for the best.

I shall end with commonplaces, after all, if what I end with be conceived in terms of thought and language only. But, thank God, what we call commonplaces in religion



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are such only in the world of talk. In that realm, great matters have grown familiar, and we think we understand them and are ready to turn to something else; but in the realm of life and doing they abide fresh and vital still. Language may weary us, but in real life nothing vital in religion is worn out. It is a commonplace to say that in the work of which we are thinking a man draws his inspirations from above. The resistance to his highest effort is on the plane of this world. His foe is human evil, but his strength is in the power of God. It is a commonplace to say this, but the experience of it has never become commonplace, outworn, or too familiar. The great servants of God have illustrated it: the average servants of God have done the same, and may do it still. Still from above does genuine power descend, upon the soul that can receive it. The heavenly freshness still abides in the toilsome work of the Christian ministry.

If for a moment I may send back the voice of one who is far along the road, let me say that never for an hour have I ceased to be glad and thankful that this way lay my journey. I have always praised God, and praise him still, for the calling of a Christian minister; and so I send back the greeting of gladness and hope to those who come after. The calling is worthy of the best men. Only the best men ought to enter it. For the best men it offers today an opportunity of useful service unsurpassed upon the great field of the world. May God bring into it all who ought to come, and no other, and make them manly helpers to their fellows in the name of Christ.





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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: March 2005

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